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Local aldermen delay review of resolution requiring Health Department to notify community of lead in water risks

MILWAUKEE – (June 29, 2017) – A critical resolution requiring the Milwaukee Health Department to improve its public communication efforts regarding the dangers of lead in Milwaukee’s drinking water was postponed during the Public Safety & Health Committee meeting this morning.

Delaying discussion of the resolution — file #170131: **‘Resolution relating to Health Department recommendations for avoiding lead exposure’** — highlights the Health Department’s continued hesitation to educate the public about the dangers of lead in Milwaukee’s drinking water.

Lead exposure is a significant threat to public health and safety. As an organization committed to improving health among its residents, the Milwaukee Health Department is responsible for creating and publicizing resources about lead exposure.

Full transparency about this public health crisis is critical in educating women of child bearing age, parents and caregivers of infants and young children, area-medical professionals and other affected Milwaukee populations about lead exposure and ways to mitigate lead absorption through drinking water.

The resolution aims to improve the Health Department’s communications efforts about lead to the public and media. Directing, for example, “[Issuing] a media advisory to inform the public that women of childbearing age and children under the age of six should not drink unfiltered water and that children under the age of six should be tested for lead.”

“My office was not notified of this last minute delay,” said Alderman Tony Zielinski, resolution sponsor and co-chair of the Milwaukee Nutrition & Lead Task Force. “I apologize to members of the community who were in attendance and encourage the media and the public to attend the next Public Safety & Health Committee meeting on Thursday, July 20.”

The committee cited certain Milwaukee Health Department funding recipient organizations and health centers as the cause for delay.

The Milwaukee Nutrition & Lead Task Force is a collaboration of public and private organizations working together to educate the Milwaukee community about sources of lead, the importance of testing water and people and the role of nutrition in limiting the rate of lead absorption. Exposure to unsafe levels of lead can cause serious health concerns, especially among children. Families can take immediate action by eating a healthy diet filled with iron, calcium and vitamin C.

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