

The Board of Health for Madison and Dane County (Board of Health) is the policy-making body for the Department of Public Health for Madison and Dane County (PHMDC). The Board of Health was created in 2007 by Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Madison and Dane County and operates under Chapter 251 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. Among its other duties, the Board of Health is responsible for advocating for the provision of reasonable and necessary public health services, for equitable distribution of public health resources, and to assure measures are taken to provide an environment which supports individual and population health.

The Board of Health has carefully reviewed Governor Scott Walker's proposed biennial budget for 2011-13. The purpose of this review was to determine the potential impact of proposed budget reductions on public health services, on the equitable distribution of public health resources, and on the health of residents in Dane County. The Board of Health finds many aspects of the Governor's proposal highly troubling with regard to their potential impact on the health of the people of Dane County. Key examples are outlined below:

- 61% of the PHMDC revenue comes from City and County budgets. The millions of dollars of proposed reductions in state shared revenues to local governments, if passed through to PHMDC, could result in budget reductions of 7% or more from city and county government sources. Reductions of that magnitude may result in reductions in staff and cuts in programs with a resulting decrease in the capacity of PHMDC to provide services and respond to public health emergencies.
- Having health insurance improves the diagnosis and control of serious chronic and communicable diseases. 12% of Dane county residents rely on Medicaid for health insurance. Proposed cuts to Badger Care along with increased premiums are likely to result in more than 5000 individuals in Dane County losing health insurance while not reducing their need for clinical care services. This will place significant care burdens on all clinical care organizations in Dane County, and will result in higher costs as individuals are forced to seek care in expensive emergency departments. It may also result in delays in identification of individuals with communicable diseases thus increasing the threat to the community.
- The proposed budget eliminates state funding for family planning. These funds support reproductive cancer screening, sexually transmitted disease screening and treatment, and reproductive health care. Eliminating these services will lead to more unintended pregnancies, delays in HIV and STD diagnosis and treatment, and increases in infertility due to undetected and untreated Chlamydia.
- The proposed elimination of funds for family planning also seriously jeopardizes the federal Maternal and Child Health Block grant to Wisconsin because of the federal Maintenance of Effort requirements; these funds provide revenues to PHMDC to support the provision of dental caries prevention and fluoride supplementation, safety and injury prevention services and prenatal care and early childhood service coordination to 1600 individuals annually in Dane County.
- Proposed requirements for Senior Care members to enroll in Medicare Part D will result in seniors paying more to fill their prescriptions.
- Proposed cut of 10% to the funding of the Tobacco Prevention and Control program will lead to funding reductions to tobacco control programs and intervention efforts across

Wisconsin, including Dane County. This reduction is likely to impact effective education of tobacco-related hazards and continued efforts to reduce youth access to tobacco products due to reductions in funding and staffing.

- Proposed transfer of the enforcement of soil erosion control regulation from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing for commercial sites will potentially degrade the effectiveness of soil conservation due to a reduction in technical expertise and scientific background available to appropriately enforce these regulatory standards compared to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
- Proposed reduction of phosphorus fertilizer standards will increase the risk of potential toxic algal blooms, excessive plant growth, fish kills, and the reduction of surface water quality. Although Dane County and the City of Madison have phosphorus control ordinances in effect, local surface waters will also be affected by upstream contamination originating in other counties.

The Board of Health concludes that the impact of Governor Walker's budget, if enacted as proposed, would result in severe reductions in the capacity of the local public health system in the City of Madison and Dane County to provide public health services, will perpetuate inequitable distribution of access to clinical care resources, will negatively impact community health, and will damage the environment that supports good health in Madison and Dane County.

Given the gravity of the threats to the health of people in Dane County posed by Governor Walker's proposed budget, the Board of Health resolves that,

This statement be submitted as written testimony in legislative deliberations on Governor Walker's proposed budget; and

Mayor Soglin and County Executive Parisi include in their communications with Governor Walker our concerns about the serious threat to the health of people in the City of Madison and Dane County that will result if Governor Walker's proposed budget is implemented; and

This statement be communicated to members of Madison Common Council and the Dane County Board of Supervisors; and

This statement be communicated to the boards of the Wisconsin Environmental Health Association, the Wisconsin Public Health Association, and the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards; and

Public Health Madison and Dane County and the Board of Health will continue to monitor health status of people living in the City of Madison and Dane County in order to determine the actual impact of service reductions resulting from budget cuts stemming from Governor Walker's budget.

Signed:

