



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DAVID CROWLEY

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Date: August 12, 2024

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors

From: David Crowley, County Executive

Subject: Reappointment of Shakita LaGrant-McClain to the position of Director of the Department of Health and Human Services

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 59.17(2), Milwaukee County General Ordinance 17.30(2) and subject to confirmation of your Honorable Body, I am pleased to reappoint Ms. Shakita LaGrant-McClain to the position of Director of the Department of Health and Human Services for Milwaukee County.

Since Shakita LaGrant-McClain was appointed Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in 2020, her work has been transformative in improving the delivery of health and human services with monumental changes in infrastructure and philosophy. Her accomplishments include the Successful integration of Aging Services, Veterans' Services, Child Support Services, and the Office for Persons with Disabilities into DHHS, and implementing a "No Wrong Door" model of customer service to improve access to high quality services for all residents across the health and human services continuum of care.

The implementation of the No Wrong Door model better connects residents to holistic services resulting in a 42% increase in individuals reached through the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC); eviction prevention for 12,000 households; 40% increase in enrollment in Children's Disability programs; and more than 3,500 veterans, dependents and survivors served.

Director LaGrant-McClain also oversaw seismic change with the redesign of the behavioral health care system, emphasizing best practices like holistic and trauma-informed care, stigma reduction and racial equity. In 2022, the Mental Health Complex and Psychiatric Crisis Services (PCS) closed after 40 years, and services transitioned from institutional care to community-based locations, meeting residents where they are.



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As part of the redesign of the behavioral health care system, the Mental Health Emergency Center (MHEC) opened in September of 2022, and was intentionally located in the King Park neighborhood to ensure convenient access for patients and families. In its first full year of operation, 2023, MHEC had over 7,000 visits, with nearly the same number of voluntary and involuntary visits, consistent with the experience at the previous hospital. The vast majority of patients served live in zip codes proximate to the facility.

Additionally, under her leadership, DHHS has invested in bringing mental health services to neighborhood-based locations, including opening three new Access Clinics in two years, co-located within Federally Qualified Health Centers, a new outpatient clinic for youth, and efficiencies and growth of the mobile crisis teams, adding to the existing community-based locations across Milwaukee County.

Director LaGrant-McClain also championed a new Marcia P. Coggs Health and Human Services Center, to be located at 1230 W. Cherry St., keeping it in the King Park neighborhood and the same trusted location where it has been for more than 50 years. On schedule to open in 2025, for the first time Milwaukee County will have a building designed specifically to deliver health and human services, eliminating physical barriers, creating a warm, welcoming, accessible location, and improving access for families and individuals to resources and services that address social determinants of health.

The new Marcia P. Coggs Health and Human Services Center is adjacent to the Mental Health Emergency Center creating a ‘human services campus’ with convenient access for all to critical services. These new facilities coupled with unprecedented housing developments are economic drivers in the King Park community.

Director LaGrant-McClain is committed to addressing housing as a social determinant of health. In addition to the new Coggs building in the King Park neighborhood, DHHS is having a broad impact on the whole community by bringing an idea to life to revitalize the neighborhood through building new housing and increasing BIPOC homeownership. By leveraging a State of Wisconsin Neighborhood Investment Fund grant, DHHS and its partners are building 100 new homes for first time homeowners to include 80 single family homes and 20 duplexes.



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Under her leadership, DHHS has advanced affordable housing developments in several surrounding communities, supported the purchase of Hillview Hall to provide emergency housing to vulnerable residents embedding services at that location, and had zero

chronically homeless individuals unsheltered for two years in a row, 2022 and 2023, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

She has also empowered her team to be leaders in Community Violence Intervention, implementing evidence-based strategies to reduce violence through community-centered initiatives. The Credible Messenger Program launched in 2021 to promote public safety by intervening in gun violence and support positive outcomes for our youth, with an emphasis on those in the youth justice system. In its first year, youth involved reported a 77% success rate for recidivism and pro-social behavior. The program has served more than 280 youth since its inception and includes six community agencies with an all-girls intervention team, a “Response Team” to respond to youth public safety situations, and the ability for community members to make referrals to the program.

In July of this year, DHHS broke ground on the new Milwaukee County Center for Youth, an investment in keeping young people closer to home and in our care, with greater access to evidenced-based programming and upstream services. The new secure residential care center for children and youth (SRCCCY) will serve up to 32 youth at a time and is scheduled to open in 2026. The facility is a treatment-oriented secure residential facility that will provide a safe, positive, sustainable, and developmentally appropriate treatment environment for youth, improve the youth justice system, and contribute to a safer community.

She has also focused on internal culture, retention and opportunities for advancement, including cross-department collaboration, new training offerings, town hall events with DHHS leaders, an annual Professional Development Day for staff, coaching sessions, internal potluck lunches, Lunch & Learn sessions, the employee engagement group—Do The Right Thing, and weekly all staff communication to share events, shoutouts, news and happenings.



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I could not be prouder of the work that has been done and will continue to be done at DHHS under the leadership of Director LaGrant-McClain. I look forward to your support in confirming Ms. Shakita LaGrant-McClain's reappointment.

Sincerely,

David Crowley
Milwaukee County Executive

cc: Supervisor Shawn Rolland, Chair, Health Equity, Human Needs, Strategic Planning
Committee
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors