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A RESOLUTION

declaring health misinformation a public health crisis and affirming Milwaukee County's commitment to health equity and combating health misinformation that threatens the health and safety of Milwaukee County residents

WHEREAS, according to the United States (U.S.) Surgeon General, health misinformation is any information that is false, inaccurate, or misleading according to the best available evidence at the time; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) health states that misinformation and disinformation is harmful to people's mental and physical health; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1990s, a falsely released study claimed measles, mumps, and rubella MMR vaccine causes Autism, a claim that was later retracted but not before it gained attention and contributed to lower vaccine rates over the next 20 years, according to the U.S. Surgeon General; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General reported that in South Africa, there was a false belief denying HIV causes AIDS, this claim was adopted by the highest level of government and resulted in fewer people seeking effective treatment for HIV and AIDS and caused the death of more than 330,000 people between 2000 and 2005; and

WHEREAS, the WHO also identified vaccine hesitancy as a leading global threat and hesitancy of the COVID-19 vaccine will lessen the probability of reaching herd immunity; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory reaffirming that misinformation is a threat to public health as it confuses people, undermines public health efforts, and prevents people from seeking preventive care and diagnostic testing; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General further indicated that misinformation tends to flourish in environments of significant societal division, animosity, and distrust; and

42 WHEREAS, the internet and social media platforms have made it increasingly
43 more accessible for people to access and share health misinformation, as the Pew
44 Research Center found that 75 percent of adults sought health care information online
45 in the past year; and

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47 WHEREAS, the Media Research Project, operated by the Associated Press in
48 collaboration with the Nonpartisan and Objective Research Organization (NORC) at the
49 University of Chicago, found that people who see an article from an unknown trusted
50 source, but written by an unknown media source, have much more trust in the
51 information than people who see the same article from a reputable media source shared
52 by a person they do not trust; and

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54 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County adopted File Nos. 20-26, 20-298, 20-328, 20-29,
55 20-30 and others that provides various informational reports and administrative orders
56 about actions Milwaukee County has taken to mitigate, combat, and inform residents
57 about COVID-19 in the County; and

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59 WHEREAS, misinformation has exacerbated a pandemic that has led to the
60 death of 1,657 individuals in Milwaukee County; and

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62 WHEREAS, misinformation is harmful to individuals' health and public health,
63 and contributes to health inequities, and more action needs to be taken to combat
64 misinformation to keep people safe, informed, and healthy; and

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66 WHEREAS, the Committee on Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic
67 Planning, at its meeting of December 8, 2021, recommended adoption of
68 File No. 21-1088 (vote 4-0); now, therefore,

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70 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby affirms
71 its commitment to health equity and declares health misinformation a public health
72 crisis; and

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74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Milwaukee County will continue its efforts to
75 combat health misinformation that threatens the health and safety of residents of
76 Milwaukee County by partnering with state and local public health agencies to build
77 long-term resilience to misinformation and continue to release timely, accurate, easy to
78 understand health information digitally, in-print and in person.

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83 S:\Committees\2021\Dec\HEHNSP\Resolutions\21-1088 Resolution declaring health misinformation a public health
84 crisis no edits ars.docx