



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DAVID CROWLEY

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Honorable Members of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors:

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 59.17(6), I have vetoed File Number 22-419, “Requesting adoption of a framework for an ongoing COVID-19 response within the organization of Milwaukee County.”

I object to the amended portion of this file in that it would violate the division of powers between the Office of the County Executive and the County Board under state law. The amendment effectively hamstring Milwaukee County’s ability to secure the health and safety of our staff and prevent us from maintaining a productive workforce.

The Administration will continue to use the framework as laid out in this file to ensure the safety of Milwaukee County employees and members of the community who use our services; however, these mitigation procedures fall within the powers of the Office of the County Executive to exercise day-to-day control of county functions as contemplated by Wis. Stat. § 59.794(3)(a).

Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has often imperiled Milwaukee County’s ability to provide quality services, yet we have been able to stay nimble, regularly pivot and continue to deliver for our most vulnerable residents.

Most critical at the moment is that we remain united in our commitment to health in an equitable fashion. Our focus and attention should remain on safety, accomplished through swift action informed by appropriate experts, and we must remove politics from our day-to-day operations.

A deliberative body would not accomplish that, nor has state law granted review and approval power to the County Board regarding the types of work rules and facility safety measures at issue here.

I urge you to engage with me, our Department of Health and Human Services, our advisors from the Medical College of Wisconsin, and the County’s Chief Medical Advisor, Dr. Ben Weston, in discussions about why I’ve issued these most recent work rules and facility safety requirements.

Let’s discuss the specific data that is used each day to amend these rules and inform these decisions. I am eager to share how we led the nation in the development of the ground-breaking EVE Model (a.k.a. the COVID-19 dashboard), which combined the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index with COVID-19 vaccination rates to create a 16-box grid color coding jurisdictions for targeted interventions. Our model has been published by the American Journal of Public Health, adopted by the CDC as of August 2021, and has become the lodestar national model. Because of our best-in-class leadership, more lives were saved.

We must continue to work to save as many lives as we can. To protect public health and ensure that our employees are safe, I've put in place a work group of the appropriate experts that will meet as much as is necessary to recommend updates to these work rules and facility safety measures.

It is my promise to you and every resident and visitor to Milwaukee County that I will implement, without alteration, the work rules and facility safety measures recommended by the workgroup. I will not politicize public health.

In conclusion, the directives that I have issued since the expiration of the Emergency Order, and those that our administration will continue to issue in consultation with experts, fall within the powers granted to my office by state statute. I remain committed to transparency with your honorable body and the public, and will continue my administration's practice of providing updates as to the status of COVID-19 mitigation procedures as we have done from the original issuance of mitigation procedures under the now-defunct Emergency Order.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Crowley', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

County Executive David Crowley