



WISCONSIN

POLICY FORUM

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
STUDY: PROJECT SUMMARY**

Rationale

- ❑ COVID-19 has tested Milwaukee County's preparedness for a public health crisis in extreme ways – as the dust clears, it will be important to determine what worked and what did not.
- ❑ The Unified Emergency Operations Center (UEOC) was formed by necessity to coordinate 11 municipal health departments; the county's OEM and DHHS; the joint EMS system; and private health systems. Analysis is needed to address whether this model should be sustained/expanded and what this experience tells us regarding structural change.
- ❑ County Executive Crowley's goal of making Milwaukee County the healthiest county in Wisconsin will only be fulfilled if longstanding racial disparities in public health outcomes are addressed; this is another motivating factor for a review of the county's public health infrastructure and how it can be fortified going forward.

Key Research questions

- ❑ How do other metro areas address racial health disparities and does their performance in this area provide clues to potential structural changes here?
- ❑ Are there coordinated county-municipal-private sector public health models from other metro areas that might provide worthwhile ideas for Milwaukee County?
- ❑ Is there a need for a permanent unified approach to public health in Milw. County to coordinate programming, planning, data collection; set common standards & priorities; and improve health equity and health improvement? What range of options exists for such an approach?
- ❑ Is there a need for better and more formalized coordination and collaboration between public sector public health agencies and private health care providers and institutions?

Project scope

- The Wisconsin Policy Forum – in partnership w/the UW-Madison Population Health Institute – will conduct a research/facilitation project to address these questions. The deliverable will be a comprehensive written report that will:
 - 1) Assess the current municipal and county public health landscape in Milwaukee County.
 - 2) Compare and contrast the county’s public health framework with those of 4-6 peer counties, which will be selected based on similar demographics and comparable health and racial equity and inequity profiles.
 - 3) Use this information and the input of community stakeholders to develop policy options and recommendations on strategies to improve public health coordination, administration, governance, and outcomes in Milwaukee County.

Specific research components

- ❑ Broad review of public health services offered by municipalities in Milw. Co., how they differ, and existing collaborative efforts involving both public and private sectors.
- ❑ Analysis of existing funding framework and resources devoted to public health services, including how jurisdictions compare in terms of resources and priorities.
- ❑ Broad analysis of the county's EOC and other strategies used to coordinate activities during the pandemic and lessons learned for the future.
- ❑ Broad review of the effectiveness of public health programming and services in Milwaukee County, viewed particularly through a lens of health equity.
- ❑ Comparisons with peer counties with regard to resources, priorities, staffing, outcomes, coordination with private sector, racial health disparities, response to COVID-19.

Project oversight

- ❑ While Milwaukee County is the sponsor, project oversight and input into recommendations will occur via a broad group of stakeholders including:
 - ❑ County DHHS and administration officials
 - ❑ Municipal health department officials
 - ❑ EMS officials
 - ❑ ICC representatives
 - ❑ Private health system representatives
 - ❑ FQHC representatives
 - ❑ Medical College of Wisconsin and Zilber School representatives
 - ❑ Diverse community stakeholders
- ❑ A smaller project steering committee will meet monthly to provide more detailed input and oversight.