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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

April 9, 2018

Alderman Donovan
(414) 531-2096

MEDIA ALERT

Ald. Donovan: Mayor needs to address exodus of inner city health care providers

In a **letter** sent today to Mayor Tom Barrett (**attached**), **Alderman Bob Donovan** urges Mayor Barrett to come forward with a plan to address the exodus of health care providers from Milwaukee's inner city.

Alderman Donovan, chair of the Public Safety and Health Committee, cites the recent announcement by Ascension Wisconsin that it will significantly downsize its operation at St. Joseph Hospital, located at 5000 W. Chambers. Today as he prepared to release the letter, the alderman said the downsizing is "yet another blow" to Milwaukee's central city.

"The tale of two cities sadly continues here in Milwaukee," Alderman Donovan said. "While we are seeing good things happening downtown, with cranes in the air and construction taking place at multiple sites, our inner city continues to suffer. Where is the mayor when he's needed there?"

In part, the letter states: "Ascension Wisconsin's recent announcement that it will reduce the footprint of the St. Joseph Hospital campus from its current 1 million square feet to a mere 300,000 – along with significant cuts in needed services – could hardly come at a more difficult time for the most vulnerable members of our community.

The time has come for your administration to step forward with a plan to address the withdrawal of health care providers from the central city. Frankly, it is past time. I ask you to respond to this issue with the urgency it deserves."

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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

April 9, 2018

The Honorable,
Mayor Tom Barrett
City Hall

Dear Mayor Barrett,

Ascension Wisconsin's recent announcement that it will reduce the footprint of the St. Joseph Hospital campus from its current 1 million square feet to a mere 300,000 – along with significant cuts in needed services -- could hardly come at a more difficult time for the most vulnerable members of our community. Recently, Health Commissioner McManus shared new and troubling information with the Public Safety and Health Committee about the HIV/STD cluster discovered only a few months ago. The City continues to search for answers to deal with the lead contaminating the homes of too many. And the uncertainty relating to insurance plans purchased under the Affordable Care Act has vanished from the headlines, but is a matter of great concern for those involved.

In all this, the collapse of St. Joseph's is about much more than the loss of a neighborhood institution around which so many have fond memories. It is ultimately about notionally non-profit institutions seeming to act entirely with an eye towards the bottom line. Ascension Wisconsin is a business. Everyone understands this. But the non-profit status of institutions like St. Joseph could reasonably be construed to confer an obligation to act at least occasionally in the public interest. And Ascension/St. Joseph is not alone. Other City hospitals have either closed or cut back significantly on their services as well.

Ald. Mark Borkowski and I have met on a number of occasions with Commissioner McManus to discuss this matter. Her knowledge and passion on this topic are greatly appreciated. She cannot, however, resolve this matter alone.

The time has come for your administration to step forward with a plan to address the withdrawal of health care providers from the central city. Frankly, it is past time. I ask you to respond to this issue with the urgency it deserves.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Donovan

Ald. Robert G. Donovan
Chair, Public Safety and Health Committee

cc: All Common Council members
Dr. Patricia McManus, Commissioner of Health
Mr. George Hinton, SDC