



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

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Joint statement from Alderman Bob Donovan and Alderman Mark A. Borkowski

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Article re HUD letter calling out poor city response to lead crisis demands comment

Today the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel ran an article detailing a letter from an official with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to Congresswoman Gwen Moore expressing frustration and disappointment in the city's handling and response to the lead crisis.

In the letter the official – Len Wolfson, HUD's assistant secretary for congressional and intergovernmental relations – said much more needs to be done by City of Milwaukee officials. He stated: "The department has been disappointed that the city has not devoted more effort and resources to resolving its operational problems so that it can begin to control lead-based paint hazards in housing again."

The letter continued: "The department's assessment indicated the city's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program has had significant turnover in leadership and key staff, with the atmosphere volatile and the program slow to respond to HUD guidance and learn from its own experiences."

Alderman Bob Donovan said: "This is all happening while the city faces a June 30 HUD deadline to provide a written plan to address and correct the issues in the lead program – yet we have heard nothing from the Mayor and the Health Department. There have also been three straight cancellations for the Steering and Rules Committee, where we are supposedly going to be briefed on where the city's response is at."

"It's all very troubling and I'm looking for answers," Alderman Donovan said.

Alderman Mark A. Borkowski: "In May the sky was falling and our (Council) investigation was moving forward on all cylinders to look into what occurred and whether we should be holding certain individuals accountable."

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“Now, the investigation of the Health Department is apparently completed but there is no word about it – nothing. There’s no sense of urgency and it’s like nothing happened,” he said.

“If the City of Milwaukee leadership doesn’t want to be held accountable for what happened, I would ask that Congresswoman Moore step up and show some leadership and demand the report and demand answers instead of blindly defending the Mayor and the interim Health Commissioner,” Alderman Borkowski said.