



April 17, 2018

Ald. Khalif J. Rainey
(414) 286-2863

Council approves Ascension service retention measure

The Common Council has approved legislation urging Ascension Wisconsin to reconsider its plans to reduce services in the City of Milwaukee.

The Council voted unanimously today to urge Ascension Wisconsin to reconsider its plans to reduce services in the city and to establish a one-year moratorium on any downsizing and service reductions at Wheaton Franciscan – St. Joseph Campus and other Milwaukee health care facilities. The resolution urges Ascension to “work with community leaders, elected officials and other local stakeholders to find alternatives to service reductions and ways to preserve health care services for Milwaukee residents, particularly in economically distressed areas of the city.”

The legislation’s primary sponsor – **Alderman Khalif J. Rainey** – said he is pleased with the strong Council support for the measure and noted it is “just the beginning of the effort to push back” on the plans for service reductions at St. Joseph (located in his 7th Aldermanic District) and other Ascension facilities.

“I am planning to sponsor a communication file to trigger a hearing that will allow for the Council to continue discussions with Ascension on this critically important issue,” he said. “Citizens across our city rely on Ascension facilities for care and they are the least able to find other options if they lose those vital services.”

Co-sponsors of the legislation are Aldermen **Michael J. Murphy, Jim Bohl, Cavalier Johnson, Bob Donovan, Mark A. Borkowski, Robert J. Bauman, Nik Kovac, Russell W. Stamper, II, Terry L. Witkowski, Tony Zielinski, José G. Pérez, and Alderwoman Chantia Lewis.**

IMMEDIATE ADOPTION

..Number

180034

..Version

ORIGINAL

..Reference

..Sponsor

ALD. RAINEY, MURPHY, DONOVAN, BAUMAN, ZIELINSKI, BOHL, BORKOWSKI, KOVAC, LEWIS, JOHNSON, WITKOWSKI AND PEREZ

..Title

Resolution urging Ascension Wisconsin to reconsider its plans to reduce its services in the City of Milwaukee.

..Analysis

This resolution urges Ascension Wisconsin to reconsider its plans to reduce its services in the City of Milwaukee and to establish a one-year moratorium on any downsizing and service reductions at Wheaton Franciscan – St. Joseph Campus and other Milwaukee healthcare facilities. During that time, Ascension Wisconsin is urged to work with community leaders, elected officials and other local stakeholders to find alternatives to service reductions and ways to preserve healthcare services for Milwaukee residents, particularly in economically distressed areas of the city.

..Body

Whereas, Ascension is a faith-based healthcare organization, and the largest non-profit healthcare system in the United States, with a healthcare division that operates more than 2,600 sites of care, including 153 hospitals and more than 50 senior living facilities, in 22 states and the District of Columbia; and

Whereas, Ascension Wisconsin operates 23 hospitals, including Columbia St. Mary's facilities and, since 2016, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare facilities; and

Whereas, Ascension Wisconsin operates Wheaton Franciscan - St. Joseph Campus, more commonly known as St. Joseph's, which has been an important healthcare provider in Milwaukee for over 130 years; and

Whereas, St. Joseph's provides emergency, obstetric, cardiac, critical care, surgical and physical rehabilitation services to residents in Milwaukee's St. Joseph's and Sherman Park neighborhoods and beyond; and

Whereas, Ascension Wisconsin recently announced plans to eliminate certain medical and surgical services at St. Joseph's; and

Whereas, The planned elimination of services at St. Joseph's leaves no general acute care hospital north of downtown Milwaukee, and will force patients and families to travel further to obtain necessary healthcare services; and

Whereas, Ascension Wisconsin also operates Wheaton Franciscan – St. Francis, a hospital on Milwaukee’s South Side, and is reportedly considering service reductions at that location as well; and

Whereas, Both St. Joseph’s and St. Francis hospitals are critical, frontline care institutions in Milwaukee neighborhoods, and any service reductions would be devastating to local residents and harmful to the city in general; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that Ascension Wisconsin is urged to reconsider its plans to reduce its services in the City of Milwaukee; and, be it

Further Resolved, That Ascension Wisconsin is urged to establish a one-year moratorium on any downsizing and service reductions at Wheaton Franciscan – St. Joseph Campus, Wheaton Franciscan – St. Francis and other Ascension healthcare facilities in Milwaukee; and, be it

Further Resolved, That during the one-year moratorium, Ascension Wisconsin is urged to work with community leaders, elected officials, and other local stakeholders to find alternatives to service reductions at Milwaukee healthcare facilities and ways to preserve healthcare services for Milwaukee residents, particularly in economically distressed areas of the city.

..Requestor

..Drafter
LRB171140-1
Dana J. Zelazny
April 16, 2018