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Ald. Tony Zielinski
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Resolution calls for comprehensive audit of Milwaukee Health Department

Alderman Tony Zielinski will introduce a Common Council resolution tomorrow directing the Office of the Common Council – City Clerk to issue a request for proposals to conduct a comprehensive operations audit of the Milwaukee Health Department.

Alderman Zielinski, chair of the Licenses Committee, said the announcement last week that officers of the Milwaukee Health Department failed to ensure adequate notification of thousands of families whose children tested positive for elevated lead levels in their blood was “a critical tipping point” for him in seeking to further investigate the operations of the Health Department.

“Quite frankly, my colleagues and I have been seeking answers and information from the Health Department for some time about several key matters, including lead testing and lead water issues, and we have been met with resistance and obstruction,” Alderman Zielinski said.

“We are talking about inadequate and inaccurate information being provided, and catastrophic failure in ensuring public health, and the audit is a critical component that can enable us to get to the bottom of what is or is not happening at the Health Department,” he said.

The alderman said he intends to make sure the audit covers a range of key issues, including lead testing record-keeping and notification, and related items. “For instance we need to know how many children tested positive for lead and at what level, and a breakdown of those children by race,” Alderman Zielinski said.

“Given what we are uncovering so far about lead testing and notification failures, we need to look at *all* areas of the Health Department,” he said. “Who is to say -- we may end up finding some other problems that are just as catastrophic and just as threatening to the health of the citizens of Milwaukee.”