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Ald. Tony Zielinski
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Common Council alerts at-risk populations of lead risks after City of Milwaukee Health Department fails to notify public

In November of last year, the Common Council approved a lead transparency resolution (file 170131) directing the Milwaukee Health Department to issue a press release to inform newly defined “at-risk populations” of the risks of lead exposure through the city’s drinking water. The resolution was signed by the Mayor on December 6, 2017 but has not been acted upon.

Alderman Bob Donovan calls the lack of action is unacceptable, “Failures at the Milwaukee Health Department and this administration have left vulnerable populations at risk.”

Women of child bearing ages of 15 to 45 years old, and children including infants and children up to the age 6, should drink water and eat foods prepared from only lead free sources.

Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II said, “We need a media advisory to warn the public about the hazards of lead and what people can do to protect their children.”

A water filter certified to remove lead should be used within homes with lead service laterals, lead pipes, and fixtures. Drinking water, and water used for cooking, food preparation, reconstituting juices, or infant formulas should always be from lead-free sources. A certified lead water filter including NSF/ANSI Standard 53 reduces residents’ risk of exposure. Previous instructions to “flush” or run water for several minutes before using are ineffective for protecting residents’ health.

Alderman Mark A. Borkowski said this issue has to be addressed, “If the public’s health is not the highest priority in this community, please tell me what is?”

Failure of the Milwaukee Health Department to issue a media advisory, combined with a failure from the Mayor’s Office to direct this legislation in the wake of the resignation of the Health Commissioner, requires the Common Council to take action to inform the public of their risks associated with lead in the water.

Alderman Tony Zielinski said the Common Council is stepping up to inform the public because the Health Department has not, “The Milwaukee Health Department lacks leadership and the Council is intent on notifying the public of health risks related to lead in the water in the absence of a Health Commissioner.”