

Alderman Zielinski: Ascension contributing to health care disparity gulf in Milwaukee

Posted on Friday, Apr 13, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Statement of Alderman Tony Zielinski

The recent news of hospital downsizing and service cuts by Ascension Wisconsin in Milwaukee is extremely troubling to me. By making these choices Ascension is exacerbating the health care disparity problem in Milwaukee, where there is already insufficient delivery of health care services in neighborhoods where people of color reside.

Vernellia R. Randall is a professor at the School of Law at the University of Dayton. Professor Randall writes extensively on and speaks internationally about race, women, and health care. In her published article *Inequality in Health Care Is Killing African Americans* (Vol. 36 No. 4), she points to racial discrimination in the U.S. and its lasting and harmful impact on African Americans.

“Compounding the racial discrimination experienced generally is the institutional discrimination in health care affecting access to health care and the quality of health care received. Racial discrimination in health care delivery, financing, and research continues to exist. Racial barriers to quality health care manifest themselves in many ways, including (1) economic discrimination, which rations health care on ability to pay; (2) insufficient hospitals and health care institutions and clinics; (3) insufficient physicians and other providers; (4) racial discrimination in treatment and services; and (5) culturally incompetent care.”

Sadly this is what we are seeing now as Ascension downsizes its services at St. Joseph Hospital. The safety net is essentially being yanked out from under the

mostly African American patient base at St. Joseph, leaving already underserved individuals to figure out what their next best options are.