Milwaukee Ald. Lewis: New Health Advisory Committee can spike citizen participation and engagement on critical issues

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For several months I have been putting together a plan that will create a Health Advisory Committee for the City of Milwaukee (I have also referred to the body as the Board of Health). I wanted to wait to present it publicly until we had a permanent commissioner of the Health Department so we could begin working on long-term issues. With new MHD Commissioner Dr. Jeanette Kowalik now at the helm, I am looking to share the plan more broadly so all-important public input and feedback can be solicited.

The Health Advisory Committee would serve as a health advisory and oversight body composed of up to 23 community members: 15 community members, six clinicians, and two non-voting ex-officio members.

The Committee would advise the Common Council and the Health Department on policy matters affecting the health of Milwaukee residents, and would also serve as liaisons between the city and community in addressing health concerns. Most larger cities have a board or commission that serves the important role that our Health Advisory Committee would be charged with serving: Seeking and publicly garnering community input, participation and citizen engagement on critical public health issues. The Committee would function in such a way that it could partner with the Common Council in working to improve overall public health by ensuring a constant flow of information that allows the Council to allocate resources and greenlight MHD programming where needed.

I ask citizens to stay engaged on this important new body and to share their thoughts about my plan directly if they wish to.

I believe firmly that the Health Advisory Committee will help us achieve a much healthier Milwaukee for our children and grandchildren!