

Sen. Taylor: Statement on contact tracing

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(MADISON) – The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel recently reported that a number of Milwaukee area residents/families who tested positive, or had a family member succumb to COVID-19, have not been contacted by the Milwaukee Health Department to begin the process of contact tracing. Understanding the critical role that methods plays in reducing community spread, Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

“It is absolutely unacceptable that the Milwaukee Health Department has yet to perform even the most basic contact tracing on the city’s first casualty, Mr. Lawrence Riley. He passed away 40 days ago. It is impossible to believe that not one of the 19 city workers or additional staff offered by the state, has made their way around to talking to a single member of his family.

Compounding the frustration is the city’s attempt to partially blame the victims or their families. The assertion that contact tracing is hasn’t happened because people don’t answer a phone call because it shows up private or with an unknown number isn’t good enough. The Riley family has said that not a single family member has received a call or message from the Milwaukee Health Department. I’m assuming there is a record of the contact attempts. If so, the Health Department needs to provide them to the Milwaukee Common Council on a regular basis.

Bottom line, we need to think out of the box in reaching out to these families. We need to increase the number of contact attempts from 3-6, use robocalls, or make home visits. I just know that when we haven’t begun contact tracing on the first Milwaukeean who died on March 19th, and it’s almost May, Houston we have a problem.”