

St. Joe's Accountability Coalition: Call on elected officials to support Milwaukee County residents during COVID-19 global pandemic

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MILWAUKEE – The St. Joe's Accountability Coalition (SJAC) is calling on elected officials representing Milwaukee at the city, county, and state levels to take bold action to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The work of SJAC has always focused on improving access to healthcare on the Northside of Milwaukee and fighting racial inequity in healthcare. We believe that this pandemic will exacerbate the existing inequities in healthcare access and quality of life for Black and Brown communities.

Milwaukee County is ranked second to last in the state in terms of healthcare outcomes in a study done by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. At the time of this writing, the majority of COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin are located in Milwaukee County. After years of ever-decreasing healthcare access for Black and Brown communities in Milwaukee, we need decisive, justice-driven, equity-oriented action from elected officials during this pandemic.

With this understanding, SJAC raises these demands:

1. **Moratorium on rent and mortgage payments**-Institute a moratorium on rent and mortgage payments and utility payments (including internet access

and cell phone access) for the people of Milwaukee County so that nobody has to choose between practicing safe social distancing and going to work, thereby risking further preventable exposure.

2. **Childcare support**-Enact childcare subsidies or alternative methods of childcare for all community members in need of childcare. Also quality protections for childcare providers with the influx of need during this crisis.
3. **Free accessible testing, medical treatment**-Provide COVID-19 testing and related medical treatment at no cost to all residents of Milwaukee County. We have the largest population in the state and the majority of COVID-19 cases. Testing to combat the pandemic should beat the need.
4. **Basic Income Support**-Institute an emergency Guaranteed Basic Income to all Milwaukee County residents to cover the costs of purchasing basic supplies (such as groceries, medicine, and cleaning products) that will allow our community to remain as healthy as possible.
5. **Expand healthcare access**-Push all healthcare institutions, whether private or public, to expand their capacity to meet the demands of the pandemic. Push the federal government to support this effort as well.
6. **Paid Leave**-Push all employers to enact paid leave for all workers in Milwaukee County. In an effort to support the public health of Milwaukee County residents, many businesses have shuttered. We need to support the workers of those businesses as we work through this pandemic.
7. **Reduce jail and prison populations to reduce COVID-19 pandemic**-Move as swiftly as possible to reduce jail and prison populations as the incarcerated are more vulnerable to disease due to overcrowded conditions.