

Milwaukee County Exec Crowley: Applauds unanimous vote to keep Marcia P. Coggs Health and Human Services Building in heart of the community

Posted on Thursday, Sep 15, 2022

>> **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.](#)**

MILWAUKEE, WI - Today, members of the Committee on Finance voted unanimously to approve \$32 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to develop a new Marcia P. Coggs Health and Human Services Building in the King Neighborhood and keep key services in the heart of the community. The building will remain near some of the Milwaukee County residents most in need of key services provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

“Today’s vote is a step forward in our journey to achieve race and health equity by making sure the needs of the community are met. For more than 50 years, the Coggs Center has served as a trusted location to access services and an inherent benefit of the location is its walkability and access to public transportation. Remaining in the King Neighborhood is key to servicing the community and with the opening of the Mental Health Emergency Center just one block away the County continues its upstream investments to meet our residents’ needs,” **said County Executive David Crowley**. “Thank you to DHHS leadership for their efforts to create a long-term, fiscally responsible plan to continue upstream community investments. And, thank you to the members of the Committee on Finance for their unanimous vote to keep the building in the community and ensure our most vulnerable residents can come to an accessible and welcoming environment.”

The resolution passed today promotes the co-location of DHHS employees to a

visitor-friendly facility to support the “No Wrong Door” approach and best serve the needs of customers. The current building is out-of-date and presents accessibility issues for residents with disabilities. Replacing the Coggs Center is an upstream investment which advances that vision by creating a Human Services Campus to help us close the gap in racial health disparities.

For over a year, DHHS has been working with Department of Administrative Services’ Facilities Management Division to identify a solution for the deteriorating Marcia P. Coggs Health and Human Services Building. The County explored leasing options which averaged between \$2 - \$3 million a year just to keep the doors open and presented significant challenges to the County’s operating budget. The annual operating leases for the alternative locations presented enormous fiscal challenges to balancing the budget without resorting to programmatic or staffing cuts.

“As someone who received services at the Marcia P. Coggs Building myself, I know how important it is for families, people with disabilities, aging residents, and other impacted residents to have a Health & Human Services building in the heart of their community,” **said DHHS Director Shakita LaGrant-McClain.** “On the heels of opening the Mental Health Emergency Center just one block away, the plan for replacing the building represents a large investment in the community and a real commitment to creating a welcoming and accessible space for our employees and participants so that they feel valued, respected, and dignified.”