

Resolution No. 59 - 01/21
Urging the State Legislature and Governor to Adopt Strategies to Assist Local Public Health Pandemic Response

1 Moved/Sponsored by: Executive Committee and Health and Human Services Board

2
3 **WHEREAS**, Walworth County is experiencing critically high levels of COVID-19 and
4 significant community spread; and,

5
6 **WHEREAS**, leadership and support from the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services
7 has been insufficient for the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving local public health to
8 make decisions without state guidance; and,

9
10 **WHEREAS**, local health department efforts to control the spread of the virus have become
11 increasingly strained. Demand has exceeded local public health capacity to effectively identify
12 cases, conduct disease investigation and contact tracing, and manage outbreaks; and,

13
14 **WHEREAS**, Walworth County’s Division of Public Health has suspended nearly all Public
15 Health programs in order to redirect resources to COVID-19 response; and,

16
17 **WHEREAS**, the continued suspension of vital Public Health Programs will lead to significant
18 and long-lasting detrimental effects on the residents of Walworth County; and,

19
20 **WHEREAS**, the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services has authorized \$526,700 in
21 funding for January 2021 through October 2022 for “Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity
22 Funding”; and,

23
24 **WHEREAS**, currently authorized funding is insufficient to continue planning, local testing
25 coordination, and contact tracing efforts beyond 2020; and,

26
27 **WHEREAS**, local public health departments are required by the Department of Services to use
28 the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) to collect a variety of data
29 needed to monitor disease activity. This system is insufficient to allow local public health
30 departments to efficiently respond to a communicable disease event of the magnitude of COVID-
31 19; and,

32
33 **WHEREAS**, public health employees have no statutory immunity from civil liability for
34 engaging in communicable disease response activities; and,

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36 **WHEREAS**, nationwide, public health employees have been harassed, threatened, and assaulted
37 by those critical of department efforts to track and manage the coronavirus pandemic; and,


38
39 **WHEREAS**, Illinois recently passed legislation that makes it so anyone who assaults an
40 employee conveying public health guidance be charged with aggravated battery.

41
42 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Walworth County Board of Supervisors
43 urges the State Legislature and Governor to:

- 1 • Authorize funding sufficient for local public health offices to respond to the COVID-19
- 2 pandemic until it is no longer deemed a public health emergency and assure sufficient
- 3 resources to resume suspended Public Health programs;
- 4
- 5 • Develop a bi-partisan and coordinated statewide response that provides clear objectives
- 6 and unambiguous guidance for local public health offices;
- 7
- 8 • Direct the Department of Health Services to further improve WEDSS and/or identify
- 9 alternative platforms that allow public health to efficiently and accurately receive and
- 10 input communicable disease information;
- 11
- 12 • Pass legislation that specifies that health care professionals, including public health
- 13 employees are immune from civil liability for the death of, or injury to, any individual or any
- 14 damages caused by actions or omissions taken in providing services to address or in response
- 15 to the 2019 novel coronavirus, provided that the actions or omissions are undertaken in good
- 16 faith or are consistent with federal, state, or local guidance to address the COVID-19
- 17 pandemic;
- 18
- 19 • Offer support for employees of local public health offices by publicly discouraging the
- 20 harassment of public health workers and encouraging Wisconsinites to respond respectfully
- 21 to local public health employees;
- 22
- 23 • Pass legislation providing additional protection for public health employees from harassment,
- 24 threats, and assault.

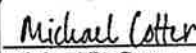
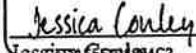
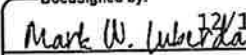
25
 26 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Clerk is hereby directed to forward a copy of
 27 this resolution to Governor Tony Evers, Legislators representing Walworth County, Secretary-
 28 designee of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Andrea Palm, and the Wisconsin
 29 Counties Association.

30
 31 
 32 _____
 33 Nancy Russell
 34 County Board Chair

30
 31 
 32 _____
 33 Kimberly S. Bushey
 34 County Clerk

35
 36 County Board Meeting Date: January 12, 2021

37 Action Required: Majority Vote X Two-thirds Vote _____ Other _____

Policy and Fiscal Note is attached.			
Reviewed and approved pursuant to Section 2-91 of the Walworth County Code of Ordinances:			
DocuSigned by:		DocuSigned by:	
	12/18/2020		12/18/2020
Michael Cotter	Date	Jessica Conley	Date
Corporation Counsel		Finance Director	
DocuSigned by:		This Resolution/Ordinance was:	
	12/18/2020	Adopted: Roll Call/U.C. /Voice	
Mark W. Lubarda	Date	Rejected/Referred/Laid Over	
County Administrator		Ayes: Noes: Absent:	
If unsigned, exceptions shall be so noted by the County Administrator.		Date <u>January 12, 2021</u>	