



April 5, 2019

Senator Alberta Darling
Co-Chair, Joint Finance Committee
Room 317 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Representative John Nygren
Co-Chair, Joint Finance Committee
Room 309 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Darling, Representative Nygren:

On behalf of the Medical Society of Milwaukee County (MSMC) Board of Directors and our 3,000 physician members, I am writing to ensure that the State budget supports health in a way that is cost-effective and results in a better quality of life for the people that live and work in Wisconsin. Since 1846, the Medical Society of Milwaukee County, a physician member organization, has been committed to improving the health of the communities in which we serve.

The research shows that in order to be healthy we must have good healthcare but also have the conditions that make health possible like employment, education, housing, transportation and a safe environment.

MSMC has prioritized a focus on housing as it contributes to health for our current strategic plan. We would like to see you consider support for housing, including addressing the acute needs for homeless individuals, in the budget. Our physicians have been actively involved in volunteering their time, expertise and leadership to helping the homeless, namely through Mr. Bob's Under the Bridge, a Milwaukee 501c (3). During this time, we have met many homeless individuals including Jim, Rosie, and a woman who lived in a tent city nicknamed "Shorty." Unfortunately, one week after we met her, she died from what we believe may have been pneumonia. Her lack of housing and as a result inability to effectively access healthcare we believe contributed to her death. Our work continues in her memory and many others.

Thank you for the work you do for people in Wisconsin. We hope you continue to prioritize the health and safety of our community. We need to find more ways to prevent poor health outcomes in patients with housing instability. As physicians, we see the homeless and those facing housing instability in our emergency departments and clinics daily and it is heartbreaking when there are not many options to help these individuals. Please let me know if you have questions or would like more information.

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As our patient schedules do not provide an opportunity for us to provide in-person testimony for your state-wide hearings, please accept this letter as our written testimony. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amar Ambardekar, D.O.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Amar Ambardekar, DO
President, Medical Society of Milwaukee County