



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
*Milwaukee County*  
CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**For Immediate Release:**

DATE: September 1, 2016  
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## **Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele Announces Reappointment of DHHS Director Héctor Colón**

*Colón Reappointment Wins Endorsement of Mayor Barrett, Gov. Doyle, Wisconsin  
Center for Performance Excellence, broad coalition of community members*

MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele today announced his reappointment of Héctor Colón as director of the County’s Department of Health and Human Services, following six years of exemplary service to Milwaukee County that has included oversight of the County’s reform of mental health care, the launch of the County’s Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, and strong leadership on the County’s push to transform our juvenile justice system into a national best-practice model.

“Héctor Colón is a visionary leader with a demonstrated ability to bring people together to solve problems. He operates with high integrity and always strives to do the right thing for his employees, people who receive services at DHHS, and the community as a whole,” County Executive Chris Abele said. “Under Mr. Colón’s leadership, DHHS has garnered numerous awards and received National, State and community-wide recognition for its dedication, collaboration, and innovation. Just this week, due in large part to Héctor’s hard work and diligent service, Milwaukee County announced the receipt of a \$2.4 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support the County’s efforts to end chronic homelessness in Milwaukee and serve additional homeless families and veterans. I am confident that we will see more successes like this under Héctor Colón’s continued leadership.”

“Under Héctor's leadership, BHD and the Milwaukee Police Department launched a Mobile Crisis Intervention Team that responds to families and children who have been exposed to violent trauma. Currently operating in Police District Seven, the team of clinicians and police work collaboratively to address the needs of those children and family members who have witnessed or have been victimized by violence,” Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett said in a letter to the County Board of Supervisors. “At a time when City and County partnerships are essential for the betterment of our community, I ask that you confirm Mr. Colón to another term.”

That team went to work just this week at Sherman Park, with officers and clinicians helping to mend a community that is still healing.

“I know that Héctor has worked as hard for Milwaukee County as he did for the State of Wisconsin. He has accomplished a great deal as the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services. Like so many others, I have been impressed by the accomplishments of the Department under Héctor’s leadership in the areas of mental health, juvenile justice and disabilities services,” former Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle said in a letter to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. “In my experience Héctor has been a true public servant. I know how dedicated he is to the people of Milwaukee County and how much he wants to continue the work he and his team have started.”

“There are specific characteristics I look for and coach to when I work with leaders, and Héctor demonstrates these through both experience and personal drive: agility, ability to influence others in a constructive way, mission focus, strategic thinking, pragmatic determination (this is his basis of innovation), and personal engagement,” Brett Remington, executive director of the Wisconsin Center for Performance Excellence, said in a letter to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. “Héctor has a vision for Milwaukee County becoming a safer, healthier, better place to live, work and play. His business acumen will help balance value for all stakeholders and directly impact the quality of life for all citizens of Milwaukee County.”

The Milwaukee Urban League, Disability Rights Wisconsin, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), the United Community Center, the Combined Community Services Board, and a number of other community leaders and organizations have also submitted letters of support for Colón’s reappointment.

### **Background:**

Mr. Colón has a strong background in human services, government administration and broad leadership skills. As Associate Executive Director at the United Community Center, Mr. Colón led staff of the Adult Day Center, Senior Center, Care Management, and Housing programs. While working for then-Governor Doyle, Mr. Colón served in several capacities and oversaw economic, workforce, and regulation initiatives. He holds a Master’s Degree in Occupational Therapy from UW-Milwaukee and certificates in Management and Leadership from Harvard, Marquette University and the University of Kentucky.

Under Mr. Colón’s leadership, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has ended a 30 year wait list for people who need long term care supports to live in the community which allowed us to serve 6,000 new people; decreased chronic homelessness by 70%; ended at 12 year section 8 waiting list; transitioned hundreds of people with mental illness and intellectual disabilities out of long-term care units and into community living arrangements; implemented over \$20 million dollars of new or enhanced community based services that has led to a 34% decrease in emergency detentions and a 20% decrease in emergency room visits and adopted the use of evidence-based assessment tools and programs within delinquency and court services to inform decision-making that has led to better outcomes for the youth in this community. In addition, Mr. Colón worked with his team to create \$27.8 million in efficiencies while providing \$56.8 million in surplus to the county’s bottom line.

Director Colón's reappointment is made pursuant to Wisconsin Statute Sec. 59.17(2) and Milwaukee County General Ordinance 17.30(2), and is subject to confirmation by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors.

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