



COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Milwaukee County

August 28, 2009

Secretary Michael Morgan
Department of Administration
101 E. Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Secretary Morgan,

Over the objections of Milwaukee County, the State has taken over the administration of the Income Maintenance (IM) program. During discussions with the Administration and the Legislature, an impression was given that Milwaukee County would be given a fair opportunity to possibly run the program again after the *West v. Timberlake* lawsuit was dismissed. The decision of the Department of Health Services (DHS) to move IM administration away from the Marcia P. Coggs Human Services Center at 12th and Vliet to a different location shifts the direction to a long-term State takeover.

The prospect of a long-term DHS administered IM program is very troubling for this community. The State's management of child welfare programs in Milwaukee County clearly demonstrates that Madison bureaucrats have yet to prove that they are better at solving the complex and unique problems facing the Milwaukee urban area than those who are closest to the people.

The IM changeover has been difficult and many clients are already a little lost in the transition. Undoubtedly, a relocation of services to an unfamiliar site will compound their confusion. This kind of unnecessary confusion could stand in the way of vulnerable populations accessing health care and food shares benefits in a timely manner. Economic times have never been more uncertain during our lifetime, and we absolutely must do everything we can to connect those in need to critical public services. Instead, this DHS decision puts up unnecessary roadblocks between government and the people we serve.

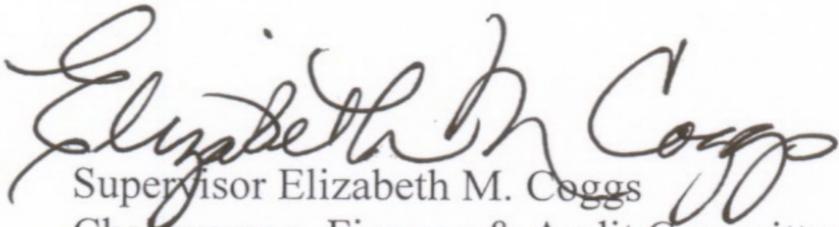
Moving IM operations away from the Coggs Human Services Center simply does not make sense for the taxpayer either. It would require a costly public information campaign by the State to inform people of the relocation of services. Already, DHS has failed to adequately communicate and publicize its new access points. Moving and transition costs must be factored. Milwaukee County taxpayers also stand to lose up to \$1.2 million next year if IM programs are moved to another location. It is also our understanding that Milwaukee County's bid was the lowest. Therefore, a review and comparison of the competing proposals is recommended and requested under the open records law.

As Chair and members of the County Board's Committee on Health and Human Needs, we request that the Department of Administration act to immediately intervene and reverse the DHS decision prior to action by the Building Commission. We fully support the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services decision to appeal the DHS selection. Your positive action is needed to prevent a decision that is bad for the taxpayer and for clients. Thank you for considering this request.

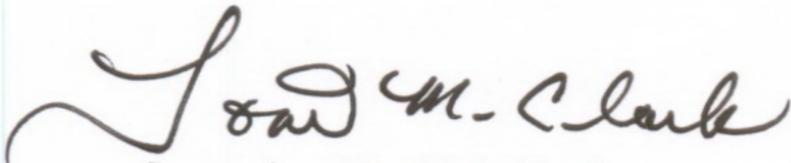
Sincerely,



Supervisor Peggy A. West
2nd Vice-Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Chairwoman, Health & Human Needs Committee



Supervisor Elizabeth M. Coggs
Chairwoman, Finance & Audit Committee



Supervisor Toni M. Clark
Chairwoman, Economic & Community Development Committee

cc: Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Milwaukee County State Legislative Delegation
Governor Jim Doyle
Senator Fred Risser
Senator Ted Kanavas
Representative Gordon Hintz
Representative Spencer Black
Representative Dean Kaufert
Alderwoman Milele Coggs