



## ***Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors*** ***Supervisor Supreme Moore Omokunde***

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### **Supervisor Moore Omokunde Votes Against Reconfirmation of Hector Colón as Director of the Department of Health and Human Services**

MILWAUKEE – The Health and Human Needs committee of the Milwaukee County Board voted three to two against reconfirming Hector Colón as the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) on Wednesday, after several hours of testimony on Lincoln Hills and other issues.

County Executive Abele recommended reappointment of Colón, who has served as the head of DHHS for nearly five years. Abele also testified in support of Colón during the committee meeting.

Supervisor Moore Omokunde, who chairs the Health and Human Needs committee, released the following statement.

“I went into today’s committee meeting with an open mind and a desire to vote in favor of Director Colón’s reappointment, but after the revelations we heard during testimony, particularly with regards to the ongoing tragedy at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, I could not in good conscience vote “yes.”

“Over the past several months I have worked with Director Colón on many important matters and we have developed a positive working relationship. We made good progress in several areas, including juvenile justice, and I was hoping to continue working with him on this and other urgent priorities.

“Despite the significant progress we have seen on various issues, I am concerned that some very troubling facts – such as the news that Lincoln Hills recently saw five suicide attempts in a 36-hour period, and that youth are actually requesting solitary confinement to escape the racial slurs of staff – only came to light at the last minute, during this hearing, rather than when the information first became known to Director Colón.

“Director Colón also hasn’t taken sufficient action on County policy to create local placement alternatives, so that Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake are not the only options available to our judiciary.

“Transparency is essential to the functioning of good government and when department heads are not forthcoming with information we need as elected representatives it is part of our oversight responsibility to ensure accountability by taking appropriate action.

“Sadly, the lack of transparency and forthrightness on the part of Director Colón seems to fit a pattern of behavior we have seen from this administration, where County Board Supervisors and the public are only given the bare minimum of information that appointees think we need, rather than all of the available information. This is unacceptable.”

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