

**RESOLUTION TO
SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE STATE FUNDING FOR LOCAL PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

**SPONSOR: DANA DAVIS
FROM: HEALTH BOARD**

WHEREAS, in Wisconsin, local health departments (LHDs) are legally required to provide a core set of public health services under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 251 and Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter DHS 140; and,

WHEREAS, responsibilities of LHDs have expanded significantly in recent years due to emerging public health threats, workforce shortages, and increasing community health needs; and,

WHEREAS, local health departments rely heavily on a combination of limited state aids, categorical grants, and local property tax levy to fund these mandated services; and,

WHEREAS, current state funding mechanisms for public health are largely outdated, not indexed to inflation, and do not reflect the true cost of delivering foundational public health services; and,

WHEREAS, Wisconsin currently ranks 49th lowest in state dollars dedicated to public health per person (https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/PH_funding); and,

WHEREAS, Public health initiatives consistently deliver high returns on investment (ROI), with recent data showing a median ROI of 14.3 to 1, often saving \$14 in medical and societal costs for every \$1 spent (<https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2025/07/08/public-health-initiatives-deliver-big-returns-on-investment>); and,

WHEREAS, reliance on short-term, restricted, or competitive grant funding creates instability and limits long-term planning; and,

WHEREAS, counties bear a disproportionate share of the financial burden for providing foundational public health services, placing additional pressure on local property taxpayers; and,

WHEREAS, a strong and adequately funded public health system is essential to protect the health, safety, and economic stability of Wisconsin residents and communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATERTOWN, WISCONSIN: that the City of Watertown supports continuing to build and retain public health infrastructure through increased and flexible funding; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such a funding model should:

- Provide increased General Purpose Revenue (GPR) support for local health departments
- Include automatic inflationary adjustments
- Allow for flexible use of funds to meet local needs
- Reduce reliance on short-term, restricted, and/or competitive grants

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Wisconsin recognizes public health as a core governmental function and prioritizes sustained investment to ensure consistent service delivery across all jurisdictions; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Watertown requests that the Wisconsin Counties Association advocates for policies that reduce the reliance on local property tax levy to fund foundational public health services; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor of Wisconsin, members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and all Wisconsin counties.

That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect upon its passage and adoption.

	YES	NO
DAVIS		
LAMPE		
BERG		
NITECKI		
BLANKE		
SMITH		
ARNETT		
HAASE		
MOLDENHAUER		
MAYOR STOCKS		
TOTAL		

ADOPTED August 18, 2026

CITY CLERK

APPROVED August 18, 2026

MAYOR