

March 25, 2020

Ald. Khalif J. Rainey
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Alderman Rainey asks Ascension to conduct free COVID-19 testing at St. Joseph's

In a letter (**attached**) to the President and CEO of Ascension Health Care, **Alderman Khalif J. Rainey** calls on the health care provider to offer free COVID-19 tests for the poor and/or uninsured at Ascension - St. Joseph in the 7th Aldermanic District, which has been the hardest hit area in Wisconsin in terms of concentration of confirmed novel coronavirus cases, according to the Milwaukee County COVID-19 dashboard.

Health Department officials say by far the outbreak is affecting African Americans more than other groups in the city and region, and especially middle-aged African American men. According to the Milwaukee County COVID-19 dashboard, the area with the greatest concentration of COVID-19 cases is centered in the 7th Aldermanic District and extends across the north side of Milwaukee, affecting African Americans almost exclusively, Alderman Rainey said.

In the March 16 letter to Ascension President and CEO Joseph R. Impicicche, Alderman Rainey notes the decision to conduct free testing and treatment by Advocate Aurora Health, and urges Ascension to offer the same at the St. Joseph Campus.

“This is community-oriented health care of the first order and a decision proportionate to the gravity of the moment...I would ask that your organization consider a similar decision for your provider network, particularly at St. Joseph's Hospital in Milwaukee,” Alderman Rainey states in his letter.

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COVID-19 free testing/ADD ONE

The alderman continues: “(St. Joseph) is the only source of medical care for many of my own constituents and serves some of Milwaukee’s poorest residents – many of whom lack adequate insurance. This pandemic cannot – must not – become a death sentence for the poor and uninsured. But without actions like those of Advocate Aurora, I fear the worst. Knowing the long-standing commitment that your organization has made to Milwaukee, I know I can look forward to a positive outcome in this matter.”

According to the Milwaukee County COVID-19 dashboard on the outbreak, there are now 231 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the City of Milwaukee, and 295 in Milwaukee County.

Alderman Rainey urges residents to take all recommended precautions to protect themselves from the virus, including staying home, social distancing and frequent hand washing. He also urges visits to the Health Department coronavirus webpage (city.milwaukee.gov/Coronavirus) for helpful information and updates.

