

**NOTICE OF REFERENDUM
PORTAGE COUNTY
April 5, 2022**

Referendum Election Details

At an election to be held in the County of Portage on April 5, 2022, the following proposed Resolution of the County Board, will be submitted to a vote of the people:

WHEREAS, the Portage County Health Care Center (a.k.a. the Portage County Home) has served Portage County residents for over one hundred years, providing long-term residential nursing care and short-term rehabilitative services to elderly and disabled citizens, and holds a current Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services 5-Star rating; and

WHEREAS, the current Health Care Center, built in 1931, is an aging facility with an inefficient design and requires continual repairs; and

WHEREAS, Portage County is licensed to operate the Health Care Center with up to 48 beds, but the Health Care Center's recent average census is 30-35 beds; and

WHEREAS, Portage County conducted a competitive procurement process (Request for Proposal or RFP) which resulted in a qualified organization being awarded a contract to complete a referendum study, public information campaign, and architectural and design services for a new Health Care Center facility; and

WHEREAS, Portage County engaged CLA to assist in creating an operational cost model to generate the financial projections that inform the referendum question being posed to voters in April 2022; and

WHEREAS, current societal trends have moved toward caring for the elderly and disabled in their homes with a wide variety of supportive services, and these trends have reduced, but not eliminated, the need for skilled nursing beds; and

WHEREAS, the payer mix of patients at the Health Care Center currently averages 66.9% Medicaid, 9.7% Medicare/Advantage and 23.4% private pay, with Wisconsin Medicaid reimbursement for skilled nursing falling short of the cost of care; and

WHEREAS, the current facility and payer mix is not adequate to create the necessary operating revenues needed to cover the current operating expenses of the facility, despite the funding support in the current referendum that expires in 2022 and the recent efforts by Health Care Center administration and staff to work more efficiently and narrow the gap of the operating losses of over \$2.5 million dollars annually; and

WHEREAS, the Health Care Center's 2022 budget includes \$1.5 million in levy (\$1.4 million from the current referendum and \$100,000 from the operating levy) and the use of \$1,109,418 in reserves and net assets. Additionally, though not considered operating revenue, the 2022 budget also includes \$471,650 in Inter-Governmental Transfers (IGT); and

WHEREAS, if the proposed referendum passes in the April 2022 election, the amount of additional funding will increase not from zero but from the funding that county taxpayers have been paying already (i.e., \$1.4 million) through the current (FY 2019-2022) referendum that will end in 2022; and

WHEREAS, the existing gap is currently funded in part with \$100,000 of tax levy from the County's general fund, which is not sufficient to meet the ongoing needs of the facility; and

WHEREAS, the Health Care Center's unmet funding need creates an ongoing operational deficit; and

WHEREAS, to ensure that the Health Care Center is able to continue operating and to provide care for elderly and disabled individuals in Portage County, additional tax levy is needed to cover the current and future operational gap, but the County cannot exceed its levy limit prescribed by law without a referendum; and

WHEREAS, §66.0602(4) permits a county to exceed the levy limit if the governing body adopts a Resolution to that effect and if the voters approve the corresponding referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Health Care Center Committee and Finance Committee have determined that it is desirable and in the best interest of Portage County to conduct a county-wide referendum to exceed the levy limit under Wisconsin Statute §66.0602(4) so the Portage County Health Care Center can continue to operate.

FISCAL NOTE: A " Yes" vote on this referendum will increase the tax levy and revenues of the Portage County Health Care Center budget by up to \$4,500,000 per year in each of the following years: 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter through 2042.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Portage County Board of Supervisors endorses and approves the recommendations from the Health Care Center Committee and Finance Committee to conduct the following county-wide referendum as part of the April 5, 2022, election to exceed the levy limit under Wis. Stat. §66.0602(4) so the Portage County Health Care Center can continue to operate, and authorizes and approves the following Notice of Referendum required by Wis. Stat. § 10.01(2)(c) and the referendum question set forth within that Notice, modified as necessary to conform to any directives from the Department of Revenue, the Wisconsin Elections Commission, and/or changes in the law, and directs the clerk to perform all necessary administrative functions to execute this resolution and to include this referendum question on the April 5, 2022, election ballot:

The question will appear on the ballot as follows:

Under state law, the increase in the levy of the County of Portage for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2023, is limited to 1.894%, which results in a levy of \$29,738,344. Shall the County of Portage be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2023, for the purpose of paying a portion of the cost to operate the Portage County Health Care Center, including costs associated with the construction of a new Portage County Health Care Center facility, by a total of 15.132%

which results in a levy of \$34,238,344, and include the increase of \$4,500,000 for fiscal years 2024 through 2042?

_____Yes

_____No

Explanation

YES VOTE

A " YES" vote means that you support granting Portage County the authority to increase the property tax levy limit up to the amount stated in the referendum question in order to allow the Portage County Health Care Center to pay a portion of its operating costs, including costs associated with construction of a new Portage County Health Care Center facility.

NO VOTE

A " NO" vote means that you do not support granting Portage County the authority to increase the property tax levy limit up to the amount stated in the referendum question in order to allow the Portage County Health Care Center to pay a portion of its operating costs, including costs associated with construction of a new Portage County Health Care Center facility.

Done in the County of Portage on,
February 15, 2022

Kayla R. Filen
Portage County Clerk