

2015 RES-317

AUTHORIZING DANE COUNTY TO PROVIDE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS IN
PUBLIC RESTROOMS OF COUNTY BUILDINGS BEGINNING IN 2016

The stigma around menstruation and the related inability to access menstrual products around the world causes women to miss school, work, and suffer repeated vaginal infections. In the United States, access to menstrual products is a significant problem, especially for low-income women. Wisconsin taxes the sales of menstrual products. Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as Food Share or food stamps, does not cover menstrual products. Incarcerated women frequently do not have access to menstrual products. Homeless women suffer an enormous burden trying to maintain their hygiene without access to menstrual products, 24 hour restrooms, and accessible showers.

The United Nations and Human Rights Watch consider menstrual hygiene integral to realizing the right to human dignity. As our County moves forward with efforts to achieve equity and greater access to health care for all people, it is important to recognize the basic human need and human right to menstrual hygiene. Other States have stopped taxing the sales of menstrual products and other communities, including New York City, are improving access by subsidizing provision of cost-free menstrual products.

NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED, that Dane County shall pilot the provision of tampons and pads at no cost in the restrooms of eight (8) Dane County buildings operated by Facilities Management beginning in 2016;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the eight (8) buildings for the pilot project shall be selected by Dane County Human Services Department staff as the facilities most accessible to low income women in Dane County;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Human Services staff shall report to Public Works and Transportation regarding the pilot project no later than July 1, 2016;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Dane County send a copy of this resolution to all Dane County funded service providers serving low income families and request that they make menstrual products available to their clients by July 1, 2016;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Dane County requests the State legislature to eliminate the sales tax on menstrual products.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Dane County requests that the U.S. Congress enact legislation to make menstrual products eligible purchases with federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP benefits - aka food stamps or FoodShare);

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Dane County send this resolution to Public Health Madison and Dane County, all Dane County municipalities, the University of Wisconsin, Madison College, school districts and State legislators requesting they take action consistent with this resolution to expand access to menstrual products.