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HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
of Northwest Michigan

www.nwhealth.org

Health Department of Northwest Michigan Announces Health Officer Retirement and New Health Officer Appointment

CHARLEVOIX, Mich. – Deputy Health Officer Lisa Peacock will assume the role of Health Officer at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan on Wednesday, February 1st. Peacock replaces outgoing Health Officer Linda Yaroch, who has served the Health Department of Northwest Michigan and the residents of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties for 40 years. The Health Department's Board of Health approved Peacock's hire in a unanimous vote on November 1st, 2016.

Yaroch, who began her career at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan as a nurse, was responsible for numerous public health successes throughout her tenure. These achievements include the launch of a Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program that serves over 3,000 residents annually and stimulates the local economy, an integrated and wrap-around care model for Health Department patients, and the creation of Dental Clinics North which now serves over 20,000 residents annually throughout Northern Michigan. Most recently, Yaroch's work resulted in the formation of the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance, a partnership between area health departments. Yaroch was also instrumental in establishing a Community Health Innovation Region stretching across a 10 county region that aims to improve health care delivery while reducing costs.

Peacock, a nurse practitioner, will continue to serve as the Health Officer at the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department – further enhancing Northern Michigan's award winning public health cross-jurisdictional sharing capabilities. Peacock earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in nursing from Grand Valley State University. Additionally, she is a Master of Public Health candidate at Michigan State University. As a nurse practitioner, Peacock has provided clinical services in Northern Michigan for over 20 years.

Filling Peacock's Deputy Health Officer position will be Erika Van Dam, also effective February 1st. Van Dam is currently the Director of Community Health Services, where she has led adolescent health, behavioral health and community health programs. Van Dam, who began with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan in 2007, earned a Master of Public Health degree from The George Washington University.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties.

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RESOLUTION

In an official session, on December 6, 2016, the following Resolution was unanimously approved by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan Board of Health:

WHEREAS, Linda Yaroch has provided 40 years of service at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan as a Public Health Nurse, Director, and Health Officer, where she has given her heart and soul to ensuring social justice and stellar Public Health services;

WHEREAS, Linda's commitment to maternal and child health began with the launching of the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program that now serves over 3,000 individuals annually, brings almost two million dollars per year in free food to the Health District, and serves as a foundation to all of the Health Department's maternal and child health programs;

WHEREAS, Linda's respect for and understanding of the challenges of the women and children participating in the WIC program led to the development of an integrated clinic model where immunizations, well child services, fluoride varnish and WIC were all offered in one visit, resulting in greatly improved immunization rates and overall health of women and children and continues to serve as a best practice model, duplicated by many health departments across the State;

WHEREAS, Linda's vision of improved access to health department services led to the creation of a centralized outreach and appointment scheduling center that greatly improved clinic flow and services and created a superior system of customer service and outreach for eight dental clinics, over ninety health department clinics, and continues to evolve as an essential feature of a clinical-community linkages model;

WHEREAS, Linda's compassion for children needing oral health services and vision for improved access to dental services led to the creation of Dental Clinics North—an entity providing oral health services to over 20,000 adults and children annually living in 12 counties in Northern Michigan;

WHEREAS, Linda's strong belief in the positive impact Public Health services have on population health and the value of local health departments working together led to the creation of the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance, which has implemented cross jurisdictional sharing agreements, initiated a process to create a shared electronic medical record database, implemented a coordinated Community Health Assessment, and developed and piloted the state's first regional Public Health Emergency Preparedness Team;

WHEREAS, Linda's tenacity resulted in the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance being designated as Backbone Organization for the Northern Michigan Community Health Innovation Region by the State Innovation Model Team, bringing millions of dollars to the region to improve health of residents, improve delivery of health care, and decrease costs;

WHEREAS, Linda's commitment to ensuring that services need to be accessible to children to provide the best opportunities for positive outcomes led to the creation of the Mancelona Family Resource Center, two Child & Adolescent Health Centers, two School Wellness Programs, and Behavioral Health services in multiple school districts across Northern Michigan, impacting thousands of children annually and improving high school graduation rates;

WHEREAS, Linda's commitment to ensuring services are available across the lifespan enabled the Health Department to continue providing quality, integrated home health and hospice services and expanding those services to include an adult Pathways Community HUB model;

WHEREAS, Linda's support of and engagement in Environmental Health Services included legal action in accordance with the FDA Food Code and Michigan's Food Law to protect the health of citizens and visitors in our area;

WHEREAS, Linda's continued support of Environmental Health responses to public health threats in groundwater and surface water led to the protection of the public through the issuance of health advisories at Bay Harbor and the creation of Well First protocols where drinking water sources are threatened;

WHEREAS, Linda's continued advocacy for the extension of the Mancelona Water and Sewer Authority to areas where TCE has impacted drinking water sources has resulted in the monitoring of hundreds of residential wells and working with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to provide safe water by connection of homes where contamination was identified;

WHEREAS, Linda's vision for and advocacy in all areas of Public Health—behavioral health, environmental health, home health, maternal and child health, emergency preparedness, and public health infrastructure/environmental change—has created systems of care that will continue to serve our communities well into the future;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health commends Linda Yaroch for her service and dedication and on behalf of the Department, its employees, and the people it serves, indicates its appreciation and says THANK YOU; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Health extends best wishes to Linda Yaroch for a long and happy retirement.


Chairperson

12/06/2016
Date