



Health & Community Services

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Media Release

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New Health Officer Starts for Kalamazoo County

Kalamazoo, Mich. [December 29, 2016] – As the current year comes to a close, Kalamazoo County welcomes Jim Rutherford, M.P.A. as Health Officer and Director of the Health and Community Services Department. He will make this transition following an eight year tenure as Health Officer for the Calhoun County Public Health Department.

“This is an exciting time for me to be back in Kalamazoo County as there are so many positive things happening in this community. I look forward to being immersed in the day to day operations of the Department and the County,” shares Jim Rutherford. “Public Health is such an important component in our lives and the Health and Community Services Department has a rich history of providing exceptional services that endeavor to protect the health of our residents and promote healthy lifestyles.”

Rutherford is a wealth of experience after 26 years in the field, and has a passion for public health. He earned his Bachelor’s degree in Biology from Olivet College in Olivet, MI and received a Master of Public Administration from Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, MI. In addition to his time as Health Officer in Calhoun County, Rutherford has served in public health roles including Environmental Health Director at both Barry-Eaton District and Kalamazoo County Health Departments as well as Deputy Health Officer in Kalamazoo from 2006 to 2008.

Notable accomplishments from Rutherford’s time in Calhoun County include aiding in the response to the 2011 Enbridge Oil Spill, helping to develop and implement evidence-based programs that significantly lowered Calhoun County’s infant mortality rate, and developing a racial health equity program and lead (Pb) reduction initiatives within schools. During his earlier stint in Kalamazoo County, Rutherford was active in the development of the County’s Methamphetamine Response Program and lead (Pb) poisoning prevention initiatives.

The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners appointed James Rutherford, M.P.A. as Health Officer for Kalamazoo County during their general session on November 15, 2016; filling the vacancy created when Dr. Gillian Stoltman left the department this past October. Lynne Norman, RN, M.P.H., Deputy Director of Health Services, has been serving as interim Health Officer during this transition period. Rutherford’s first day as Health Officer for Kalamazoo County and Director of the Health & Community Services Department was Wednesday, December 28, 2016.

More information:

Health Officer. A local health department shall have a full-time local health officer appointed by the local governing entity. The local health officer shall possess professional qualifications for administration of a local health department as prescribed by the department. The local health officer shall act as the administrative officer of the board of health and local health department and may take actions and make determinations necessary or appropriate to carry out the local

health department's functions under this part of functions delegated under this part and to protect the public health and prevent disease.

(Excerpt from Public Health Code Act 369 of 1978; Section 333.2428:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(q14ld4el3b0w350o3xb2splp\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-333-2428\)](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(q14ld4el3b0w350o3xb2splp))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-333-2428)

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