
ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE



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West Michigan Partnership for Children to Launch October 1

GRAND RAPIDS – Foster care in Michigan is often difficult to navigate and measuring outcomes is complicated. West Michigan Partnership for Children (WMPC) is the result of direct, intentional change in how child welfare services are delivered throughout Kent County. Representatives from Kent County, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Network180, the 17th Circuit Court and local child welfare agencies (including Bethany Christian Services, Catholic Charities West Michigan, D.A. Blodgett/St. John's, Samaritas, and Wellspring Lutheran Services) are partnering to create WMPC in an effort to drive improved outcomes for children in the foster care system.

Kent County is the only county in Michigan with such a pilot, which officially launches on October 1. Several other counties have expressed interest in the program. WMPC will pilot a performance-based contract, utilizing a case rate that incentivizes permanency while allowing for flexibility and creativity in funds. Staff will use software that allows for predictive analytics to project successful outcomes and flag cases that are at risk.

Wayman Britt, Kent County Interim Administrator/Controller, believes successful outcomes can be achieved through public/private collaborations between child and family focused agencies, school districts, foundations, business leaders and County staff who put the needs of displaced and vulnerable children first. "These agencies have been working together on improving these systems and outcomes for children for several years through the Kent County Families and Children Coordinating Council (KCFCCC)," said Britt. "Kent County is an innovator and leader in the State of Michigan as it relates to quality, outcome driven programs and services for children in the foster care and child protection systems. Forming West Michigan Partnership for Children is the most logical next step."

Oversight will include a Child Welfare Advisory Committee made of judiciary members and court administration, community members, and representatives of County Administration. The committee will be tasked to do the following:

- Review performance data of the Kent County Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) Office for child protection investigations outcomes and in-home child welfare services, and WMPC for out-of-home child welfare services.

- Provide constructive feedback to the KCFCCC, WMPC, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services related to performance trends and community support in order to improve outcomes.

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