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West Michigan Partnership for Children announces new CEO

Names New CEO, Hiring for New Leadership Role Focused on Advancing Equity in Foster Care

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. (Nov. 11, 2020) -- The [West Michigan Partnership for Children \(WMPC\) Board of Directors](#) is pleased to announce the appointment of Sonia Noorman as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as of November 16, 2020. Noorman's appointment replaces founding CEO Kristyn Peck who recently accepted an opportunity that will bring her closer to family in the D.C. area.

"The Board has complete confidence in Sonia's ability to successfully lead WMPC through the final two years of the innovative foster care pilot," said Cheryl Schuch, WMPC Board Chair and CEO of Family Promise. "Sonia has the expertise and vision necessary to continue to advance performance and has an excellent reputation with Kent County and statewide child welfare system stakeholders as a collaborative partner."

WMPC has been operating a community-based foster care model for three years through a contract with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and is currently the first and only performance-based child welfare model in Michigan.

Noorman's passion for transforming child welfare in Kent County is longstanding. She actively participated in the statewide team of public and private child welfare champions that developed the model WMPC implements today for four years prior to WMPC's public launch on October 1, 2017. She served as WMPC's Chief Operating Officer since the organization's inception, working alongside WMPC's first CEO, Kristyn Peck, to develop the organizational infrastructure and leading the Performance and Quality Improvement and Care Coordination teams.

Through collaboration with WMPC's partner agencies, Sonia led WMPC to decrease length of stay of Kent County children in foster care by 7 percent and to a 20 percent reduction in the days children in foster care are placed in residential settings.

"As Chief Executive Officer, I will continue to focus on building an inclusive culture at WMPC, and on building equity in the Kent County foster care system," said Noorman. "I am eager to work with child welfare system stakeholders to create a trauma-responsive child welfare system that addresses disparities and inequities that are experienced by children and parents," she said.

Prior to working at WMPC, Sonia served as the Division Director for Wellspring Lutheran Services' five foster care programs in Michigan, increasing Wellspring's statewide foster care program revenue by 20 percent.



Noorman has a M.S. in Development and Family Studies and a M.S.W. from the University of Illinois, as well as a B.A. in Psychology from Calvin College. Noorman has also completed the Result Based Leadership Institute offered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

This appointment leaves WMPC's Chief Operating Officer position vacant, and the Board has decided to restructure the organization's leadership to include some of the more operational responsibilities in the CEO position and develop a new Chief Engagement and Equity Officer position it believes will better meet the needs of the organization and the foster care system.

"In line with our values of tireless collaboration and commitment to transparency, we conducted a survey of more than 100 WMPC stakeholders to assess the priorities for WMPC in these next two years of the pilot," said Sean DeFour, Vice Chair of WMPC's Board of Directors and Chief Operating Officer at Wellspring Lutheran Services. "The feedback from the survey pointed to a need for an increased focus for WMPC on advancing equity in the foster care system and increasing trust with persons with lived experience. We believe the Chief Engagement and Equity Officer will allow WMPC to have a specific focus in these areas."

The Chief Engagement and Equity Officer (CEEO) will provide visionary leadership to execute a model community engagement strategy to galvanize champions for WMPC's vision and mission. The CEEO will also be responsible for creating and overseeing a Board Program Development and Innovation Advisory Committee which will include representation of persons with lived experience as recipients of services that WMPC oversees.

Interested applicants can find more information at [WMPC's website](#).

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