



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ***WMPC Urges Governor Whitmer and the Michigan Legislature to Restore \$2M to Foster Care***

*WMPC administers foster care for 850 children in Kent County*

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.** (Oct. 10, 2019) - Caught in the middle of the budget negotiations in Lansing are more than 850 children in the Kent County foster care system served by West Michigan Partnership for Children (WMPC).

Separate from the \$1 billion line-item vetoes, there was an administrative transfer, stripping \$2 million from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' contract with WMPC. If not reversed, WMPC will no longer be able to continue to administer foster care in Kent County and the administration of foster care will revert back to the public agency.

“We have spent our last two years on foster care system transformation, informed by feedback from youth who have experienced the foster care system, their families, and from foster parents,” said Kristyn Peck, chief executive officer of WMPC. “We hope that the governor and Legislature will return to the table to negotiate a budget agreement that restores this important funding,” Peck said.

This administrative transfer will be an abrupt end two-years into a performance-based foster care pilot for which there was a shared five-year commitment that had bipartisan support and statewide champions. The model WMPC is piloting draws from the best of models nationwide that have demonstrated improved safety, quality, and consistency of foster care services and outcomes and has received national recognition.

“We are deeply passionate about our work, and take our responsibility to improve outcomes for our community’s children very seriously,” said Peck. “In our two years of operation, we have already decreased placements in institutional settings, increased



family reunifications and placements with relative caregivers, and decreased length of stay.”

WMPC and its partner agencies, Bethany Christian Services, Catholic Charities West Michigan, D.A. Blodgett -- St. John's, Samaritas, and Wellspring Lutheran Services have provided foster care to more than 1,300 children in the Kent County foster care system since it launched on October 1, 2017 through a contract with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

For more information on West Michigan Partnership for Children, visit: [wmpc.care](http://wmpc.care).  
For media interviews or to arrange an interview, contact Emily Richett at [emily@gethappypr.com](mailto:emily@gethappypr.com).

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