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Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon appoints Herman McCall to lead state's child welfare system

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon today announced that Dr. Herman McCall will be the new executive director of the department's Children's Services Agency.

McCall, of Albion, has been director of MDHHS's Juvenile Justice Programs since 2014. He has more than three decades of experience in child welfare and education. In his new role, he will lead the department's oversight of Michigan's child welfare system, providing support to children and families so that they can reach their fullest potential.

McCall will replace Steve Yager, who is retiring after 30 years of service to MDHHS. McCall will work alongside Yager beginning on Monday, Feb. 27, to provide for a smooth transition. He will assume the executive director position following Yager's last day on April 28.

"Herman's expertise in child welfare and his commitment to meeting the needs of vulnerable children in Michigan will allow the department to continue the tremendous progress that Michigan has made with its child welfare system under Steve Yager," said MDHHS Director Nick Lyon. "Herman will make sure that we continue to improve outcomes for children by protecting their safety and well-being and ensuring that children in foster care find permanent loving homes – either through reunification with their families if that's safe, or through adoption."

In the last several years Michigan has greatly improved services to the nearly 13,000 children in the state's foster care system who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. As a result, the state is on the path toward exiting federal court oversight of its child welfare system that began following a 2006 lawsuit.

As director of Juvenile Justice Programs, McCall has led department oversight of state-operated secure residential treatment facilities and provided support to the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice. His previous state service includes directing W.J. Maxey Boys Training School and working for the former Bureau of Child and Adult Licensing.

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In the private sector he has held leadership and executive level posts overseeing a variety of child welfare, education and community-based initiatives. He also has provided direct care and social work services for children and families and has taught as an adjunct instructor.

McCall has a bachelor's degree in social work and sociology from Hillsdale College, a master's degree in counseling from Western Michigan University and a doctorate degree in education from California Coast University.

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