



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

NICK LYON
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 10, 2015

CONTACT: Jennifer Smith
(517) 241-2112

MDHHS Appoints New Deputy Director for Medical Services Administration

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Nick Lyon taps Chris Priest, who helped guide public healthcare policy efforts in two states and helped state and legislative leaders develop the Healthy Michigan Plan, to lead the Medical Services Administration, effective October 12.

“Given his background and wide array of healthcare experiences, I am confident that Chris will make an excellent leader as deputy director of Medical Services within MDHHS,” said Nick Lyon, director of the MDHHS. “This is an important and exciting time for Medicaid in Michigan, and Chris’ guidance will be instrumental going forward.”

As the MSA deputy director, Priest will also serve as Michigan’s Medicaid director overseeing several health care programs, including MICHild and the Healthy Michigan Plan. These health care programs currently serve almost 2.3 million Michigan citizens, including roughly 600,000 enrolled in the Healthy Michigan Plan, and support a broad range of health care services, such as inpatient and outpatient hospital care, physician visits, prescription drugs, nursing home care, durable medical equipment, and mental health services.

Priest comes to MDHHS after working most recently as Governor Rick Snyder’s deputy director of Strategy, where he advised the Governor on various issues, including health care and insurance. Previously, he served as the director of the Bureau of Medicaid Policy and Health System Innovation in the former Michigan Department of Community Health, which was responsible for many aspects of the Medicaid program and several health reform issues, and as the project manager involved with the health insurance exchange in the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

Prior to these appointments, Priest served in the State of Michigan’s Washington D.C. office under former Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, served governors from the State of Indiana, worked with private sector clients on health policy, and worked in the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. He holds a Master’s Degree in Public Policy from George Mason University in Virginia and a Bachelor’s Degree in Public Affairs from Indiana University.

Prior to this appointment, Kathy Stiffler has served as the acting deputy director for MSA after Steve Fitton’s retirement in June. Stiffler will now continue in her former role as the Director of the Bureau of Medicaid Care Management and Quality Assurance within MSA.

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