
Our Medical Director, Dr. Nirali Bora, has decided to move on to new adventures after six years in the role of our chief medical executive. Dr. Bora has been an exceptional public servant in the midst of some of the most trying times in public health history. As a family physician by training, she came to us with a heart for making our services more accessible to all. There are countless examples of how this focus drove her work to care for everyone who calls Kent County home. Seeing the concerning data about the rise in sexually transmitted illnesses, she formed a coalition of partners that continues to explore the problem, identify opportunities for improvement, and work together to see that people have important information and resources. When Mpox (formally known as Monkey Pox) arrived in West Michigan a couple years ago, local health agencies were challenged with a severe lack of vaccine supply, she worked closely with populations at the greatest risk to make sure they were protected. As many people know, Kent County is a resettlement destination for many refugees from war-torn nations – Dr. Bora has worked with these families and other community organizations to help ensure that they have dignified medical care.

During the darkest days of the COVID pandemic, keeping schools open and the community healthy were among the highest of our priorities. Using the best science of that time, Dr. Bora created a decision-guiding algorithm for the schools to help them navigate tough decisions about learning format and extracurricular activities in the midst of dramatically fluctuating conditions. As conditions began to improve with the advent of COVID vaccines, the challenge of adequate supply persisted for several months. During that time, Dr. Bora played a key role in allocating the scarce supply of vaccine to ensure that those at the greatest risk were prioritized and served. In these situations, and in too many more to list, Dr. Bora has been a determined advocate for the health of all persons. In fact, our department has five annual awards that are presented to staff for various qualities. Four of the five awards are named after historic public servants here in Kent County (Dr. Slemons, Dr. Prothro, Dr. Mack, and Dr. Delabbio). The fifth award had gone unnamed for many years. That formerly unnamed award recognizes a staff member who was nominated by their co-workers for doing exceptional work to make our services welcoming for all people and responsive

to the needs of underrepresented groups during the course of the previous year. As of 2023, it is now known as the Dr. Nirali Bora Award.

The job of Medical Director is one of two roles, along with Administrative Health Officer, that are required of local health departments by the Michigan Public Health Code. Since local health departments provide medical services, the departments must have a physician on hand to issue standing orders and empower licensed health professionals to deliver services in our clinics and nursing programs. Medical Directors also serve in an advisory role to the Administrative Health Officer on matters related to human medicine and they work as part of a leadership team driving continuous quality improvement. They are also essential for local health departments in our relations with hospitals, community clinics, and other organizations providing medical care in the region. October 4th will be Dr. Bora's last day with us, however, we are exploring the possibility of a short term contract to bridge her medical coverage to that of her eventual successor. We are now accepting applications for the position of Medical Director. The position requires a license of MD or DO, board certification, experience providing public health services, and an MPH degree. Applicants lacking the MPH degree may be granted provisional appointment with a commitment to obtain the degree within a period of time. Please share this opportunity with well qualified persons looking to work in this dynamic field.