



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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## **Children's Services Agency executive director leaves Michigan's child protection well-positioned to continue success reform**

*Stacie Bladen to serve as interim executive director*

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Children's Services Agency is poised to continue the successful reform efforts that have occurred under the leadership of JooYeun Chang, who is leaving for a new position with the federal government.

MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel has announced the appointment of Stacie Bladen as interim executive director for the Children's Services Agency.

"JooYeun Chang has been a passionate advocate for children and families as executive director," Hertel said. "She has led a reform of the state's child protection system that prioritizes family well-being and preventing abuse, neglect and trauma. I am confident that this progress will continue under new leadership. Stacie Bladen has played a key role in our successes as Children's Services Agency policy and program deputy director. She and her team will make sure that reform efforts continue to move forward."

Chang's last day with MDHHS is Friday, Feb. 19.

The Children's Services Agency oversees the state's child welfare system, including Children's Protective Services, the foster care system that serves approximately 12,000 children, adoption services and juvenile justice programs.

During Chang's nearly two years with MDHHS, with Bladen serving as deputy director of the Children's Services Agency. The agency has transformed the child welfare system by:

- Investing in early intervention and prevention so that families can be assisted before children are at risk of imminent harm or need to be removed from their families. MDHHS partnered with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to analyze data to determine which families are most at risk so the department can intervene.

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- Ensuring that children are placed in family-like settings whenever possible and increased monitoring of child-caring institutions where some children in foster care are placed so they are safe from harm.
- Making great progress in better protecting children, which resulted in [praise from the federal judge overseeing the state's child welfare system](#) and Children's Rights, the advocacy group that sued the state seeking improvements.
- Addressing Children's Protective Services case backlogs and improving services for children and families.
- Ensuring during the pandemic that MDHHS continues its mission to protect children while also making sure that frontline staff, families and children stay safe.

Bladen brings a wealth of experience to the position, having worked for more than 25 years in child welfare positions that include foster care, adoption and as a Children's Protective Services employee. For the past seven years, Bladen has overseen statewide policy and programs across the continuum of child welfare programs. She also worked closely with complaint investigations and system oversight as director of the Office of Family Advocate and earlier in her career worked alongside tribal social services in Montana.

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