

## **Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Local Medical Director Receives Public Health Champion Award!**

**(Coldwater, MI)** Champions are described as individuals who have a vision of what the future could hold and possess the courage to risk failure, knowing that setbacks produce growth. They are people who see their opponents as partners and their challenges as opportunities for improvement. Dr. James Phillips, M.D., Medical Director for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is one such individual.

On April 17, 2013, Dr. Phillips was recognized by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and its partners as one of Michigan's three Public Health Policy Champions for 2013, during its Annual Public Health Week Event, held in the Capitol Rotunda in Lansing, Michigan. This year's theme, "Return on Investment," highlighted the cost savings associated with public health prevention. Dr. Phillips, a strong advocate of prevention programming, has earned his title. At the state level, he has worked to promote the adoption of expedited partner therapy to curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and infections. Locally, he has been very involved in expanding access to walking trails and paths, as a way to address health issues associated with the obesity epidemic.

According to Dr. Phillips, "Expedited partner therapy has been adopted by other states and has led to a decrease in sexually transmitted disease infections, as well as a reduced costs associated with treatment and a reduced reliance on public services to treat infections." When commenting about walking trails and paths, he states "building trails is cost beneficial from a public health perspective. Studies have shown that every \$1 investment in trails can result in a greater return in direct medical benefit. In fact, in some locations, these trails and walking paths have provided business opportunities for local entrepreneurs." He went on to state "These are only two of many examples of cost savings that can be realized through public health efforts. There are hundreds more."

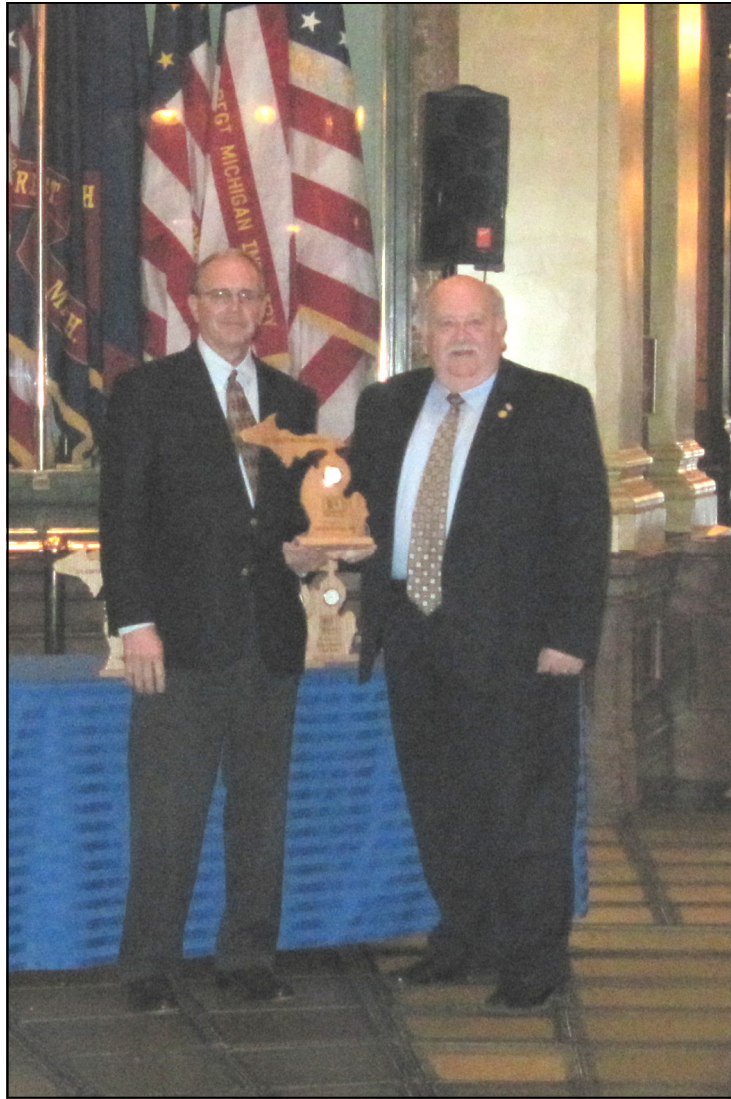
This year's annual public health event showcased the value of investing in prevention: research shows that investing just \$10 per person per year in proven, community-based public health efforts can save the nation more than \$16 billion within the next five years. That's a return on investment of \$5.60 for every \$1 invested.

The annual event is sponsored by the Michigan Department of Community Health, in partnership with the Michigan Association of Local Public Health, the Michigan Public Health Institute, the Michigan Association of County, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan School of Public Health and Wayne State University. In addition to awarding public health policy champions, eight local community hometown hero awards were also presented.

Steve Todd, Health Officer for the tri-county agency, congratulates Dr. Phillips on receiving this honor. "We are proud of Dr. Phillips and his efforts. Like many of the staff in our agency, his hard work and dedication exceeds the boundaries of the job requirements and shows a high level of personal commitment and investment. He is very well deserving of this honor."

For more information about public health services available with the tri-county area, go to our website at: [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).

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From Right to Left: Dr. James Phillips, M.D.,  
Medical Director, Rep. Ken Kurtz, 58th District.



From Right to Left: Steve Todd, Health Officer, Dr. James Phillips, M.D., Medical Director, Rep. Matt Lori, 59th District.