



"Your Local
Health Department"

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Aging & Adult Services Agency Director Richard Kline Visits Local Area Agency on Aging

(Coldwater and Sturgis, MI) During the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's regular Board of Health Meeting on December 14th, the Board and staff welcomed Richard Kline as a special guest. Senior Deputy Director Kline works in Lansing most days, but has made it a top priority to visit each of Michigan's 16 regional Area Agencies on Aging.

The Michigan Aging & Adult Services Agency (AASA) is Michigan's designated state unit on aging, formed under the Older Michigianians Act of 1981. AASA operates under the authority of the federal Older Americans Act, which was signed into law in 1965 to meet the diverse needs of the growing numbers of older adults in the United States. Their mission is to provide statewide leadership, direction, and resources to support Michigan's aging, adult services, and disability networks, with the aim of helping residents live with dignity and purpose. The Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) further carry out the mission, in each of their respective planning and service areas. For Branch and St. Joseph

counties, Region 3C serves as the local Area Agency on Aging and they are uniquely housed within the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency.

While in Coldwater, Director Kline met with Area Agency on Aging 3C staff and discussed multiple topics including; local services, elder abuse prevention activities, funding needs, the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program, and the unprecedented growth in the Area Agency on Aging's Community Living Program. The group also met with other local service providers, community agencies, and community advocates at the H. & C. Burnside Center in Coldwater and at the Enrichment Center in Sturgis. Director Kline shared: "I'm extremely impressed with the volume of work the Area Agency on Aging Region 3C does with so few staff! It was a pleasure to meet with their local network partners, board members, and advocates. They are actively engaged locally and at the state-level."

Andrejs Rozentals, an active Michigan Senior Advocates Council delegate from Three Rivers said "I tell our Representatives how well we work together down here and that we need additional funds to support these agencies so we can serve more people." Dennis Brieske, a State Advisory Council Member from Coldwater volunteers his time to develop recommendations for the State Commission on Services to the Aging and AASA's consideration. "Our research can help frame state-wide priorities and best practices, we are glad to have Director Kline visit us locally to see some of these best practices impacting the lives of older adults."



From Left: Rebecca Burns, Health Officer, Community Health Agency; Richard Kline, Director, Michigan Aging & Adult Services Agency; Laura Sutter, Coordinator, Area Agency on Aging 3C; Mark Wiley, Chairperson, Board of Health/AAA Policy Board.

The mission of the Branch-St. Joseph Area Agency on Aging (3C) is to provide a full range of high quality services, programs and opportunities which promote the independence and dignity of older adults while supporting those who care for them throughout Branch and St. Joseph Counties. For more information about the Branch-St. Joseph Area Agency on Aging (Region 3C), please contact Laura Sutter at (517) 278-2538 or via email at sutterl@bhsj.org.