

--For Immediate Release--



Board of Health hires New Elkhart County Health Officer

Elkhart County, Indiana (December 23, 2020) – Tonight, in a special session, the Elkhart County Board of Health proceeded with the appointment of a new Elkhart County Health Officer. Dr. Bethany Wait will replace the current Elkhart County Health Officer, Dr. Lydia Mertz, who is retiring at the end of December 2020. On Monday, December 28, 2020, the Elkhart County Commissioners will address certification of the Board of Health’s appointment and approval of Dr. Wait’s employment agreement.

“We are pleased to announce that Dr. Bethany Wait has accepted our offer to lead the Elkhart County Health Department beginning January 1, 2021 when Dr. Lydia Mertz retires,” said Randy J. Cammenga, MD, FACEP, Chairman of the Elkhart County Board of Health. “Dr. Wait is well known in the community as an excellent physician with strong administrative skills. We are fortunate to have her in this leadership position, particularly now as Dr. Mertz retires and we continue to address Covid-19 in Elkhart County.”

Dr. Wait, a native of Goshen, Indiana, is a Board-Certified Family Physician and Managing Partner at Goshen Family Physicians. She also serves as a member of the medical staff at Goshen Health and Medical Director for Goshen College. Wait earned her medical degree at Michigan State University of Osteopathic Medicine and did her Residency with Memorial Family Medicine. She is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Indiana State Medical Association, and the American Medical Association.

“I have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Wait as part of the medical staff at Goshen Hospital. She is kind, compassionate and an outstanding physician,” added Dr. Michelle Bache, Vice President of Medical Affairs at Elkhart General. “Elkhart County is fortunate to have her in the role of County Health Officer.”

Wait, intends to audit Elkhart County Health meetings until she officially assumes the role of County Health Officer on January 1, 2021.

“Bethany Wait DO is an excellent clinician and leader in our community,” said Randy Christophel, MBA, FACHE, President and CEO of Goshen Health. “We are blessed to have her as our new Health Officer.”

Dr. Lydia Mertz who has served as Elkhart County Health Officer since December of 2017, announced in early 2020 that she intended to retire at the end of the year. “Dr. Mertz has done a phenomenal job at a very challenging time.” added Cammenga. “It’s important to note that she too, is fond of Dr. Wait. And that we are in good hands moving forward.”

“We are lucky to have such a gifted physician eager to head the Elkhart County Health Department,” said Mertz. “I can retire knowing the department is in good hands. The citizens of Elkhart County will be able to trust her guidance through to the end of this pandemic.”

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ABOUT THE ELKHART COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

The Health Department is led by a Health Officer who is entrusted with the responsibility of addressing public health concerns of the county. This is accomplished through various divisions and programs of the Health Department. The mission of all health departments in the United States is to promote a healthy life and lifestyle by increasing the quality and years of healthy life and eliminating health disparities. The Elkhart County Health Department carries out its mission in association with the Indiana Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other governmental and public health agencies.

ABOUT THE ELKHART COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT BOARD:

The Board of Directors of the Elkhart County Health Department consists of seven men and women who live and work in Elkhart County. Current Board Members are Randy J. Cammenga, MD, FACEP, Chairman, Bill Davis, Attorney, Vice-Chair, Donald C. Findlay, II, DDS, D. Tom Mellin, MD, Josi DeHaven, MPH, BSN, RN, CCM., Ebenezer A. Kio, MD and Todd Meier.