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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release:

Veda Sharp named acting director of state's largest public mental health system

Veda A. Sharp, deputy director of the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency since 2001, has become the acting Executive Director for the Agency, following approval by the Wayne County Commission.

Sharp has worked for Wayne County for more than 12 years in various executive positions. She is a licensed social worker and holds a Master's Degree in social work from The University of Michigan.

"Veda Sharp's leadership has been an innovative and steady force for the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency as it oversees the state's largest and most diverse public mental health system," said County Executive Robert A. Ficano. "Consumers, consumer families, providers and stakeholders know that Veda has been instrumental in charting the course of the Agency's reforms, improvements, and achievements for consumers. Her new role ensures the Agency is in excellent hands during a critical time when the need is growing for public mental health services."

The Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency oversees crisis intervention and mental health referral services for the county's 2 million residents and ensures services for more than 55,000 consumers with persistent mental illness, developmental disability, serious emotional disturbance, and substance use disorder. The Agency is a division of the Wayne County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

"Wayne County and our residents have benefited greatly over the years from Veda Sharp's tremendous leadership and commitment to human services," said HHS Director Edith Killins. "She has provided exceptional leadership for the mental health agency as the number of consumers has grown and the Agency has developed innovative programs to meet the changing and growing needs of our consumers and their families. She is a consummate professional who is always quick to credit and praise consumers, staff and stakeholders for the great work achieved by our system."

Sharp has a remarkable tenure in social and health services during four decades of often ground-breaking work. She was the founding director of BIRTH – Babies Inalienable Right to Health – which became a model for prenatal care programs. She later worked for the state

Michigan Department of Public Health. Earlier, she worked on the congressional staff for Senator Carl Levin and U.S. Rep. Sander Levin.

Sharp joined Wayne County in 1995 as the assistant division director for Patient Care Management System, the division responsible for indigent health care programs. She later was named the special assistant for juvenile justice policy and programs with the County Department of Community Justice. A tireless worker and advocate for consumers and the community, Sharp is married with four children. -end-