

THE CHRONICLE

T E L E G R A M

Kern to lead Board of Mental Health

Dr. Kathleen Kern was appointed as the new leader of the Lorain County Board of Mental Health.

Kern will become executive director May 1 when current Director Charles Neff retires. Kern is the associate director of the board. She is a

licensed psychologist with 18 years of experience in behavioral health, including more than a decade serving the Lorain County community.

"For nearly four years, Kathleen has supervised all facets of our agency," Neff said. "She is uniquely positioned to understand how every aspect of our highly functional board works together, from clinical services for adults and children to operations and finance to administration."

Neff and Kern have worked together at the state level in partnerships with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, other county boards and government associations.

Neff has served for 30 years.

During her tenure, Kern has designed and developed multiple programs. She established the crisis liaison program, which resulted in a reduction in the number of youths who are psychiatrically hospitalized and the number of youths who lack connection to a provider after a crisis assessment. She also implemented the youth-led "You Belong" program, now in eight local middle schools. Additionally, she has helped bring funds to Lorain County through co-authoring grants for pilot projects.

"It's bittersweet to announce my retirement," Neff said. "I feel privileged to have given 30 years of my

career to the clients, consumers and providers of the Lorain County mental health network. Our board is a strong organization, and I am thrilled to be leaving it in very good hands."