

A Message from the Executive Director

Dear prevention community,

This year has been full of surprises, changes, and unknowns. And we are only seven months in. We have found ourselves navigating a global pandemic, critically reviewing and addressing systemic racism within our work, and at Prevention Network, staffing changes and new board members, among many other things.

I am excited to announce that I will step in as Interim Executive Director at Prevention Network. Prior to this, I coordinated the Michigan Higher Education Network (MIHEN) and supported collegiate substance misuse prevention efforts across the state. I graduated from Oakland University and have a background in implementing evidence based prevention strategies on college campuses. I have also had the opportunity to provide key notes in the past, written journal articles, and received numerous honors, including the 2019 Michigan Preventionist of the Year from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care. I look forward to meeting and connecting with as many people as possible in this new capacity over a [*virtual* cup of coffee](#) in the coming months.

In the midst of many unknowns, Prevention Network continues to push forward. COVID-19 has exacerbated feelings of isolation, stress, mental health challenges, and Substance Use Disorders, making our work more important than ever. Prevention Network remains committed to providing resources, professional development, and technical assistance to individuals, grassroots groups, and community organizations. Our togetherness is essential to the goals of preventing substance misuse and other high risk behaviors, improving the health and safety of communities, and developing leaders and citizens who will challenge the present and enrich the future.

We know the next fiscal year will look and feel different, as we acclimate to staffing changes and new board members, in addition to navigating our current environment. To prepare for the challenges we can see, as well as those that might wait around the corner, Prevention Network has developed a [COVID-19 preparedness plan](#), moved all meetings and major events to a video conferencing platform, continues to host professional development and offer continuing education credits through virtual trainings, and is connecting with community members via email and phone. We have also launched a [COVID-19 resource page](#) on our website for colleges and universities, families, people in long term recovery, coalition members, and providers. As always, I am impressed by the dedication and compassion of our staff, funders, networks, and individuals we work with throughout this difficult time.

Despite the current need to mask-up and stay at a safe distance from each other, we see an increasing need to create healthy, safe communities, free of substance misuse.

Wishing you health, safety, and togetherness,

Louise Harder, Executive Director
Prevention Network