APHSA Recognizes the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at the ISM Education Conference & Expo 2025

Arlington, VA: IT Solutions Management for Human Services (ISM), an affinity group of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), is honored to announce that the **Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE),** has been recognized for the *Best Use of Technology for Customers—External Focus* for their **Proactive Communication for Medical Reviews.** This award recognizes the innovative use of technology to enhance and expand external service delivery with a focus on a public-facing outcome, while demonstrating a new service to customers or filling the gap in existing services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, states were required to maintain continuous Medicaid coverage for enrollees. After that period, states were tasked with redetermining eligibility for millions of beneficiaries; a process known as the "unwinding." In Kansas, this challenge was compounded by the need to ensure that vulnerable populations did not lose coverage due to procedural issues, missing documentation, or not reporting address changes.

After the U.S. Digital Service (USDS) conducted a site visit to Kansas, they provided a set of targeted recommendations to improve the consumer experience and reduce unnecessary coverage loss. The resulting task was how to operationalize and expand upon the USDS recommendations to create a proactive, technology-driven system that minimized procedural disenrollments, improved consumer trust, and ensured continuity of care for eligible residents. The goal was not only to implement the USDS recommendations but to build a scalable, resilient infrastructure that could support future public health and policy shifts.

KDHE took a bold, technology-driven approach that considered new communication approaches and user-centered design. The goal was to not only reduce procedural disenrollments but to fundamentally improve consumer experience, increase operational efficiency, and build a resilient system for the future. The solution was to develop a proactive communication strategy, an automation platform that enabled timely, personalized outreach to Medicaid consumers. This system was designed to engage members at every critical point in the renewal process, using their preferred communication method. KDHE's multichannel outreach—tailored to consumer preferences—resulted in a 90 percent consumer satisfaction rating.

Consumers responded positively to the clarity, timing, and convenience of the messages. One user commented, "The Proactive Comms thing has been really good…. My husband liked that the

address confirmation came as a text since it was easy to confirm it right then. He said if it had been a robocall or email he is pretty sure he would have ignored it (not on purpose, but just because it would be easy to forget about it)."

KDHE's proactive reminders and simplified renewal process led to a 10 percent increase in reviews returned on time. This improvement helped ensure that eligible individuals maintained coverage without interruption and reduced the need for follow-up outreach or manual intervention. This feedback reflects the success of KDHE's strategy to meet consumers where they are—using SMS, voice, and email to deliver timely, actionable information. These results also confirm that consumers are willing and able to engage digitally when communication is clear, timely, and accessible.

The Best Use of Technology for Customers—External Focus award was presented during this year's IT Solutions Management for Human Services (ISM) Education Conference & Expo, held September 14–17 in Reno, Nevada.

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About APHSA

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) supports leaders from state, county, and city human services agencies to advance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities nationwide. As a bipartisan membership association, they work with their members to generate pragmatic solutions grounded in lived experience. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.