

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 7, 2024

Contact: Jessica Garon
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H. Duane Fontenot Honored with APHSA Service Award at Annual ISM + PHSA Education Conference & Expo

AURORA, CO: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is honored to announce that H. Duane Fontenot, a long-time technology advisor, has been awarded the *APHSA Service Award* during this year's [Information Technology \(IT\) Solutions Management for Human Services \(ISM\) + Public Human Services Attorneys \(PHSA\) Education Conference & Expo](#). This award recognizes Fontenot's exceptional contributions and decades of unwavering dedication to advancing human services through innovative technology solutions.

"Duane's leadership, technical acumen, mentorship, and unwavering commitment made this achievement possible," shared Marci McCoy-Roth, Chief Impact Officer at APHSA, who co-presented the award. She highlighted Fontenot's instrumental role in the success of the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) stating, "Over the past 11 years, Duane has been instrumental to NEICE's success, participating in countless calls with state and federal partners, and our technology vendor, Tetras Corporation, as we scaled NEICE nationwide." McCoy-Roth continued, "His work has significantly reduced the time children wait to be placed across state lines, benefiting countless families across the country."

Donna Jarvis-Miller, APHSA's Director of Membership and Events, who also presented the award, praised Fontenot's years of support for the APHSA conference team. "Duane has been a guiding force for our events team, providing invaluable contributions to the planning and success of our conferences," said Jarvis-Miller. "His quiet guidance and spirit of service have been a source of reassurance and inspiration."

Duane Fontenot's efforts have elevated the future of human services. With deep gratitude from APHSA members, partners, and staff, we honor his legacy—one which continues to inspire us all. As he retires later this month, APHSA extends its deepest gratitude for his incredible contributions to NEICE, ISM, and the human services sector.

*The [ISM + PHSA Education Conference & Expo](#) is jointly hosted by two APHSA affinity groups—the *IT Solutions Management for Human Services (ISM)* and the *Public Human Services Attorneys (PHSA)*. This year's event took place October 6–9 in Aurora, CO.*

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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 with a focus for equity and belonging. Visit www.aphsa.org to learn more.



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October 9, 2024

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Cherrel Campbell-Street Recognized at the Annual ISM + PHSA Education Conference & Expo
Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services Honored with the Jerry Friedman Excellence in Leadership Award

AURORA, CO: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) proudly recognizes Cherrel Campbell-Street, Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS), with the prestigious *Jerry W. Friedman Excellence in Leadership Award* at its annual [Information Technology \(IT\) Solutions Management for Human Services \(ISM\) + Public Human Services Attorneys \(PHSA\) Education Conference & Expo](#).

Cherrel Campbell-Street has been with TDHS since November 2011 and currently serves as the Deputy Commissioner of Programs and Services. Throughout her tenure in the human services sector, she has demonstrated a proven record of accomplishments in leading and driving several federal and state programs to meet and exceed standards of compliance and goals.

Amiran Gelashvili, US Health and Human Services Lead at KPMG LLG, praised Campbell-Street's accomplishments stating, "Cherrel embodies the spirit of the Jerry W. Friedman Award by making time for individuals and fostering supportive relationships that transcend professional interactions. She believes in the transformative power of engagement and relationships, advocating for interactions that fulfill the human spirit beyond mere transactions. An example of sustainable and adaptable contributions to the human services sector, Cherrel's work continues the legacy of Jerry."

Having served for over 25 years in delivering and leading human services, Campbell-Street's career spans across two state administrations. In that time, she has consistently emphasized employment services for persons with disabilities and strengthening public-serving programs. She possesses a unique blend of programmatic experience that incorporates vocational rehabilitation service delivery and leadership, most recently leading family assistance, child care, and child support programs.

Campbell-Street's leadership for TDHS has not only transformed the organization, its technologies, and service delivery models, but has also set a standard for how human services should evolve to meet the needs of the workforce and community. It is for these reasons and more that she has received the *Jerry W. Friedman Excellence in Leadership Award*.

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Kentucky Agencies Receive Collaboration Across Boundaries Award at APHSA's ISM + PHSA Education Conference & Expo

AURORA, CO: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is excited to announce that the Kentucky Health Information Exchange (KHIE), Commonwealth of Kentucky, and the Office of the Inspector General have been awarded the *Collaboration Across Boundaries Award* during the annual [Information Technology \(IT\) Solutions Management for Human Services \(ISM\) + Public Human Services Attorneys \(PHSA\) Education Conference & Expo](#). This distinguished award recognizes the exceptional collaborative efforts and technological advancements achieved through the KHIE-TWIST integration, significantly enhancing healthcare management for foster children.

Jennifer Harp, Executive Director of the Office of Application Technology Services at the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, emphasized the massive impact of this integration stating, "The KHIE-TWIST integration significantly enhanced the ability of a Child Welfare Worker (CWW) to manage healthcare for foster children by providing timely and crucial information." This integration has been instrumental in verifying well-child visits and necessary vaccinations, essential for maintaining the health of these children. Additionally, CWWs can review the reasons behind doctor and emergency room visits, enabling them to respond to health crises and follow up on treatment plans.

Since January 2023, the KHIE system has generated 69,365 notifications passed through to TWIST, playing a critical role in informing CWWs of significant health events. This includes 1,523 hospital discharge notifications and 8,346 emergency department discharges. It also sent 1,624 hospital admission and 12,906 emergency department admission alerts, ensuring CWWs remained informed of critical health events. Furthermore, KHIE flagged 64 hospital readmissions within 30 days, highlighting potential continuity of care issues. It generated 2,356 specialty visit notifications and 34,640 alerts for laboratory results, helping CWWs promptly access and act on new health information.

"The integration also supported the collection of health data for presentations and case reviews, such as the Kentucky Child and Family Services Review (KY CFSR), ensuring comprehensive evaluations of a child's well-being," Harp added. The system identified 14 suspected drug overdose cases, 7,561 emergency visit overutilization alerts, 271 possible positive COVID-19 test results, and 60 abnormal A1C results, crucial for managing ongoing health risks.

Harp concluded, “The KHIE-TWIST integration has been invaluable in supporting the healthcare needs of foster children, providing CWWs with necessary information to ensure timely interventions, coordinated care, and overall well-being. The effort has been a huge success.” This tremendous achievement, along with the initial push for systems alignment, is why this group has received the well-deserved honor of the *Collaboration Across Boundaries Award*.

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The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System Recognized with Best Use of Technology for Customers - External Award at APHSA's Annual Information Technology Conference

AURORA, CO: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is honored to announce that the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) has been awarded the *Best Use of Technology for Customers – External Award* during the annual [Information Technology Solutions Management for Human Services \(ISM\) + Public Human Services Attorneys \(PHSA\) Education Conference & Expo](#). This award celebrates organizations that have excelled in their use of client-facing technologies, and AHCCCS has clearly demonstrated that they are more than deserving of this recognition through their use of technology to assist community members in maintaining Medicaid coverage following the end of the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Kristen Challacombe, Deputy Director for Business Operations at AHCCCS, highlighted the initial challenge her agency faced, stating, “When the pandemic ended in 2023, AHCCCS faced an unprecedented effort to determine Medicaid eligibility for all 2.5 million enrolled members within 12 months.” To address this, AHCCCS leveraged technology to initiate a multi-channel approach that engaged members and reduced additional workload burden on staff.

Introducing the Surge Call Center, a specialized center to handle the influx of Medicaid renewal-related inquiries, they successfully managed over 32,000 calls and 25,000 live agent chats in eight months, with an impressive average wait time of just 29 seconds. This operational efficiency led to a customer satisfaction (CSAT) score of 94 percent. Additionally, the AHCCCS Connect text/email/phone messaging initiative was groundbreaking in its ability to keep members informed and engaged throughout their renewal process. This multi-modality communication solution, which also included a new chatbot (SAM) that answers more than 80 renewal questions, reached over 1 million households in the first five months and achieved an 89 percent customer satisfaction rate.

“The introduction of these technological advancements has significantly enhanced our system’s accuracy, efficiency, and overall effectiveness,” Challacombe highlighted. “These improvements have translated into faster, more reliable case management, better stakeholder satisfaction, and substantial cost savings, demonstrating the transformative impact of this initiative on our mission and operations.”

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The Arizona Department of Child Safety Honored with Best Use of Technology for Customers - Internal Award at APHSA's Annual Information Technology Conference

AURORA, CO: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is excited to announce that the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) has been awarded the *Best Use of Technology for Customers - Internal Award* during its annual [Information Technology \(IT\) Solutions Management for Human Services \(ISM\) + Public Human Services Attorneys \(PHSA\) Education Conference & Expo](#). The award recognizes the remarkable advancements of the “DCS Classification of Allegations” project, which leverages Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) to enhance operational efficiency and accuracy.

Frank Sweeney, Chief Information Officer and Assistant Director of Support Services at the Arizona Department of Child Safety, highlighted the transformative impact of the project stating, “The ‘DCS Classification of Allegations’ project, in its remarkable leveraging of GenAI, has brought substantial improvements in our operations.” The initiative has notably reduced classification errors by 30 percent, improving the accuracy rate from 75 percent to 95 percent. “GenAI’s advanced algorithms have streamlined the classification process, which in turn minimize human errors and ensure more reliable outcomes,” Sweeney explained.

The project has also significantly enhanced search capabilities, reducing the average time to find information from 15 minutes to under 2 minutes—an 87 percent reduction. “Data retrieval has become 40 percent more efficient, allowing staff to access critical information quickly and enhance their decision-making processes,” Sweeney noted. Additionally, the implementation of virtual assistance tools has led to a 25 percent decrease in time spent on routine data entry and processing, freeing up staff to focus on more complex tasks. Real-time guidance from virtual assistants has sped up decision-making by 20 percent, improving the department’s ability to handle cases effectively.

Overall, operational efficiency has improved by 22 percent thanks to streamlined tasks and automation. “Real-time data analysis has boosted our ability to identify and address issues proactively,” Sweeney added. The department has seen a remarkable 40 percent increase in early problem detection and an 18 percent improvement in service delivery due to the ability to adapt quickly based on data insights.

The project has also led to increased stakeholder satisfaction with positive feedback from stakeholders rising by 30 percent. “This project has significantly enhanced our system,” Sweeney

concluded. “These improvements have translated into faster, more reliable case management, better stakeholder satisfaction, and substantial cost savings.” Overall, the “DCS Classification of Allegations” project has brought about drastic improvements in DCS’s ability to serve communities, demonstrating why they are being honored with the *Best Use of Technology for Customers - Internal Award*.

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Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Recognized with Best Use of Technology for Customers - Internal Award at ISM + PHSA Education Conference & Expo

AURORA, CO: The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has been awarded the *Best Use of Technology for Customers - Internal Award* during the annual [Information Technology \(IT\) Solutions Management for Human Services \(ISM\) + Public Human Services Attorneys \(PHSA\) Education Conference & Expo](#). Produced by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), this conference is the premiere event for human services IT leaders and attorneys. This year, its *Best Use of Technology for Customers - Internal Award* recognizes the implementation of PacBot, a groundbreaking technology that has revolutionized internal processes within DCFS.

James Daugherty, Chief Information Officer of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, highlighted the transformative impact of PacBot stating, “PacBot’s effects have been nothing short of profound. Its implementation has significantly increased productivity for internal DCFS staff in the Guardian’s Office.” In its first 12 months of use, PacBot reallocated 4,802 manual processing hours—equivalent to the work of more than two full-time staff members—and processed 13,806 consent requests for 4,293 youth in care.

By alleviating the burden of manual processing, PacBot has enabled workers to focus on value-add tasks that require human judgment. “Through automation of data entry, staff can now dedicate their time to vetting the accuracy of requests instead of copying and pasting data from one system to another,” Daugherty explained. “This shift has not only reduced the potential for human error in data entry but also allowed more time for accuracy checks, mitigating the risk of potential medication and dosage errors that could have severe medical consequences.”

The processing efficiencies realized through PacBot have nearly eliminated the backlog of pending requests and significantly decreased calls to the consent hotline about request status. Additionally, the Guardianship Administrator has noted an increase in employee morale due to PacBot with agents reporting feeling less stressed and more caught up on their work.

As a result of PacBot’s implementation, youth in care across the state of Illinois now receive access to critical psychotropic medication and care an average of 27 business hours faster, equating to an 80 percent reduction in wait time for request processing. Daugherty emphasized, “The outcomes of this effort are of critical importance to the health and well-being of Illinois youth in care, as

timely processing of requests is inextricably linked to the timely receipt of necessary medication that helps youth succeed.”

APHSA congratulates the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services on this well-deserved recognition and looks forward to seeing continued advancements in technology that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of human services organizations.

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