

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephanie Saperstein Receives PHSA Beacon of Service Award

Longtime Utah human services attorney recognized for more than three decades of leadership, collaboration, and public service

Salt Lake City, UT — October 6, 2026: The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is pleased to recognize **Stephanie Saperstein**, Deputy Division Director of the Environment, Health, and Human Services Division in the Office of the Utah Attorney General, as the recipient of the **Public Human Services Attorneys (PHSA) Beacon of Service Award**.

The Beacon of Service Award was presented during the [PHSA Education Conference 2026](#), taking place October 4–7 in Salt Lake City, UT. The award recognizes an attorney whose contributions light the way for others, illuminating a path of progress, justice, and commitment to the public good.

Saperstein has represented Utah’s human services agencies, including the state’s Medicaid program, since 1993 and has led teams of human services Assistant Attorneys General since 2007. Throughout her career, she has served not only as legal counsel, but as a trusted advisor helping agency leaders navigate complex legal, policy, and operational challenges.

Her leadership has been particularly important during periods of significant change. Saperstein led the legal team supporting the Utah Department of Health and Human Services through the COVID-19 pandemic and, while that work continued, helped navigate the consolidation of the Utah Department of Health and Utah Department of Human Services. During the 18-month merger process, she advised state leaders on critical legal issues while helping ensure continuity as programs and responsibilities moved between agencies.

Today, Saperstein leads a team of attorneys addressing legal issues spanning child welfare, services for people with disabilities, public benefits, provider licensing, and other areas of health and human services. She serves as a trusted legal advisor to department leadership and has contributed to major policy and operational efforts, including recent reforms to Utah’s licensing rules, statutes, and investigation processes.

Saperstein has also strengthened collaboration across Utah’s human services legal community. Recognizing that attorneys supporting different divisions and programs often encountered overlapping legal issues, she has helped create stronger connections among legal teams that historically operated separately. This more coordinated approach has improved visibility into legal risks and helped the department develop more consistent guidance across programs.

Equally important to Saperstein's legacy is her investment in the attorneys she leads. She empowers team members to take ownership of complex legal matters while providing guidance, mentorship, and space for discussion needed to develop their expertise. As she prepares for retirement, Saperstein is intentionally building the team's capacity for the future by broadening attorneys' experience, developing future leaders, and establishing a thoughtful succession plan designed to maintain a high-quality legal operation.

"Stephanie has never viewed her role as simply being an attorney for the department," said Tracy S. Gruber, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Health and Human Services. "She empowers the attorneys she leads to take ownership of complex legal matters while providing the mentorship and support they need to grow. Her commitment to developing a strong team will ensure that her impact continues well beyond her own tenure."

For more than three decades, Saperstein has combined legal expertise with a deep commitment to the successful operation of Utah's human services agencies. Through periods of change and complexity, she has provided steady counsel, strengthened collaboration, and invested in those who will carry the work forward—a lasting record of service to Utah's human services sector.

###

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, APHSA works with its members to generate pragmatic solutions grounded in lived experience. For more information, visit aphsa.org.

Media Contact: Jessica Garon, jgaron@aphsa.org

