FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 12, 2022

APHSA Announces Recipients of 2022 Lifetime Achievement Awards
Brenda Donald and Michael Gargano Named as Honorees

ARLINGTON, VA – At this year’s National Health and Human Services Summit—the first in-person Summit since 2019—the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) embraced the opportunity to catch-up by recognizing not just one, but two well-deserving recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was established by APHSA to recognize an individual’s lifetime contributions to the field of health and human services that have a lasting impact on people and communities well beyond their tenure. This year’s first recipient, Brenda Donald, is currently the Executive Director of the District of Columbia (DC) Housing Authority, but her public service spans more than three decades. She has led the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) on multiple occasions, served as the city’s Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, contributed to building evidence-based practices across the nation while at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, led child welfare and workforce development reforms as the Secretary of Maryland’s Department of Human Resources, and served the City of Little Rock, Arkansas as Assistant City Manager. Donald has also served in multiple volunteer leadership roles within APHSA, including as interim Chair of the Executive Governing Board during an important time of transition. Her practical, concrete ideas and strategic activism helped guide the association’s way forward for many years.

Tracy Wareing Evans, President and CEO of APHSA, reflecting on the first time she ever met Donald shared, “I left that day believing more than ever that we can shift our systems upstream and create a more responsive child welfare system. Brenda, perhaps as much as any leader in the country, shifted our collective thinking about what is possible.”

David Hansell, Senior Policy Advisor of Child Welfare at Casey Family Programs and former Commissioner of New York City’s Administration for Children's Services also shared, “Brenda has been an inspiration to me and, I’m sure, to so many other leaders in the human services field. She’s an innovative leader with enormous commitment and very little ego, and a warm and generous friend and colleague. As Deputy Mayor and CFSA Director, she was continuously finding innovative ways to better serve DC children and families. And she’s a fearless risk-taker—as witnessed by her taking on the challenge of leading the DC public housing authority at a time when others would have moved on to a well-earned retirement.”
The second recipient of this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award is Michael Gargano, former Deputy Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). His career of service and commitment to health and human services spans multiple decades—serving both directly in the public sector and in support of the sector from the private industry.

While there are countless examples of Gargano’s lasting impact in the field, in many ways it can be summed up through his tenure over the past two years. In March of 2020, Michael took the reins of FSSA as acting Secretary. During this time, he oversaw the largest and fastest growth in human services in Indiana’s history. Medicaid recipients became nearly 1 in 3 Hoosiers, SNAP grew by 300%, as did TANF. Provision of the Child Care and Development Fund became the bedrock of keeping the child care system open. All the work he had done pre-pandemic to build a nimble and data-driven human services program came to fruition. Despite all these pressures, he oversaw a seamless and successful implementation of the state’s integrated eligibility system as well as the continuation of progressive work in reforming long-term care.

Dr. Jennifer Sullivan, Senior Vice President for Strategic Operations at Atrium Health and former Secretary of FSSA, shared, “It is not often that a government official becomes truly beloved by their team and by their constituents. Michael is that person. He is fair, kind, and a visionary. He mentors without hesitation. A nod of his head is enough to reassure the most incredulous. Leaders across the city, state, and country will point to him as their reason for doing what they do.”

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Awards. APHSA is eternally grateful for leaders like Donald and Gargano who have helped build thriving communities across the country—leaving a lasting impact on both the field and those it serves.

The **2022 APHSA National Health and Human Services Summit** took place June 12-15 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA.

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*The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is a bipartisan national membership association representing state and local health and human services agencies and the subject matter experts that help execute their mission to improve outcomes for people nationwide. Building on their long-standing relationships with health and human services leaders, APHSA focuses on generating pragmatic solutions that advance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

APHSA connects its members to national policymakers and human-serving organizations across a wide circle of stakeholders in the health and human services sector, as well as key partners in education, housing, employment, and others. They also help members build more capacity for their teams through access to professional education and development conferences, technical expertise, publications, and their Organizational Effectiveness practice. To learn more about APHSA, please visit [www.aphsa.org](http://www.aphsa.org).*