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**APHSA Urges Pathways for a Better Human Service Future**  
*Association Releases Vision, Challenges Policymakers to Address Unsustainable System*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) today called on the 2012 presidential candidates to formulate plans for addressing a national human service structure that is unsustainable in its present form. In an open letter to the presidential candidates, APHSA stated that sharply rising demand for services coupled with limited budgets at all levels are leaving states and communities unable to meet need and improve outcomes.

APHSA, which represents state cabinet-level health and human service commissioners, along with administrators and program directors from states and counties across the country, noted in its letter the many innovations in practices and programs that states and counties have developed. But, with current economic problems likely to linger for years and with federal policy limiting states' ability to innovate, human service agencies cannot provide the kind of governmental response once taken for granted.

"We cannot bring successes to scale under the current federal policy and funding framework," the letter stated. "A sustainable and national solution requires new approaches to public investment, a new commitment to outcomes over process, and mutual responsibility for the well-being of all Americans."

APHSA is offering its support and expertise to all the candidates in creating their policy platforms, and in the letter outlined its vision for transforming the nation's human service system—*Pathways: The Opportunities Ahead for Human Services*. The *Pathways* initiative is designed to develop, build consensus for, and implement an outcomes-based, integrated, client-centric system of policy and practice for human services.

*Pathways* emphasizes prevention efforts that strengthen families and communities before individuals find themselves in need of assistance; early intervention that moves at-risk families toward a more positive path; and bridge supports that provide temporary but vital opportunities for quick movement into the workforce. In addition, *Pathways* urges efforts to build capacity incentives to hire those needing work and encourage sustainability through supportive infrastructure and far greater use of community, faith, and home-based interventions and services.

Many agencies around the country are now implementing creative, effective practices and programs that demonstrate this vision. But to achieve that vision on a national scale, *Pathways* calls for key organizational tools to be available to all agencies. These include the ability to use funding more effectively; a modern and integrated technology infrastructure; a talented and strategically deployed workforce; accountability for meaningful outcomes; and client engagement that leads to appropriate responses to each person's and family's situation.

Through *Pathways* APHSA will work not only to engage the presidential candidates, but to lead a national conversation on the future of human services, including detailed policy, practice and regulatory recommendations and action blueprints in 2012.

“We can no longer afford to use valuable public dollars for short-term, temporary fixes, something the present fragmented, output-driven system has done for far too long,” said APHSA Executive Director Tracy Wareing. “With appropriate improvements, the human service system can provide our clients and the larger society with better results, greater efficiency and stronger, healthier and more independent lives.”

The full text of the open letter is available at [www.aphsa.org/Policy/Doc/Pathways-Open-Letter.pdf](http://www.aphsa.org/Policy/Doc/Pathways-Open-Letter.pdf).

### ***About APHSA***

APHSA is a bipartisan, nonprofit organization representing appointed state health and human service agency commissioners—the nation’s top government human service executives from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories—and their key state program managers, plus hundreds of county-level directors of human services throughout the nation—for the exchange of knowledge, data, best practices, policy review and development, networking and advocacy. APHSA’s mission is to pursue excellence in health and human services by supporting state and local agencies, informing policymakers, and working with our partners to drive innovative, integrated and efficient solutions in policy and practice.