

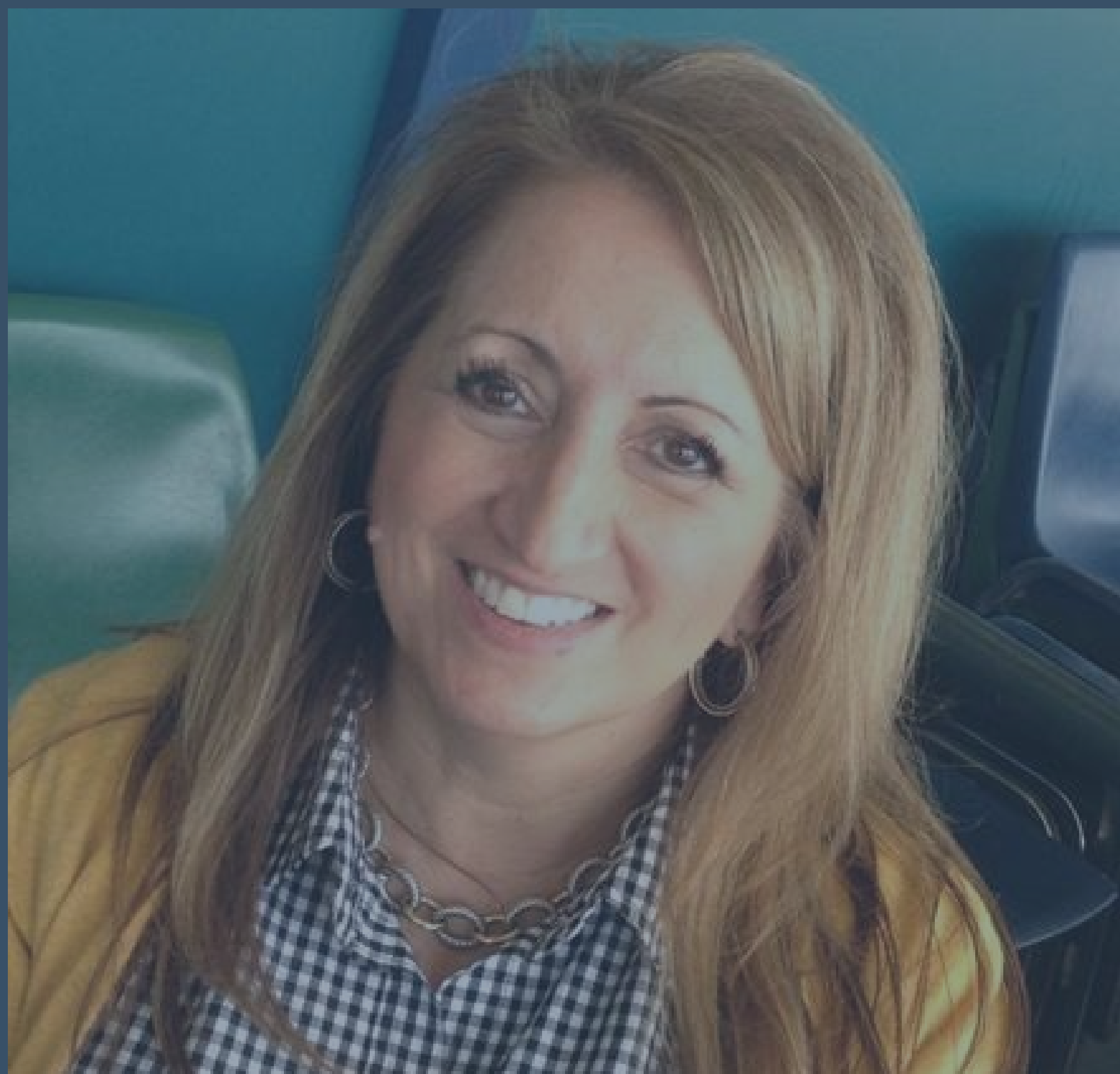


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Susan Burton Team Excellence Awards



About



Susan Burton worked for the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) for 27 years and retired from the Division of County Operations in 2019, just a few months before her death from breast cancer. Susan loved her team and knew how important teamwork is to serving clients. In one of her last emails to her team, she wrote,

"There are almost a million Arkansans who can access health care because of the work WE do ... They don't know us. They don't know our names. They don't even know we exist. But they are depending on us. We have a great responsibility. We are a great TEAM ... and for that, I am GRATEFUL."

That is especially true two years into a global pandemic. In 2021, DHS continued to face challenges and obstacles from COVID-19, but we also saw that when we work together, we are overcomers and a relentless force for good – for our clients and communities. As a team, we are resilient – because we are DHS.

We continue to honor Susan's commitment to and legacy of teamwork, through these awards, which launched in 2019. Each quarter, leadership selects winners in four categories: customer service, innovation, program improvement, and operational improvement. Overall winners are selected for the year from the quarterly winners.

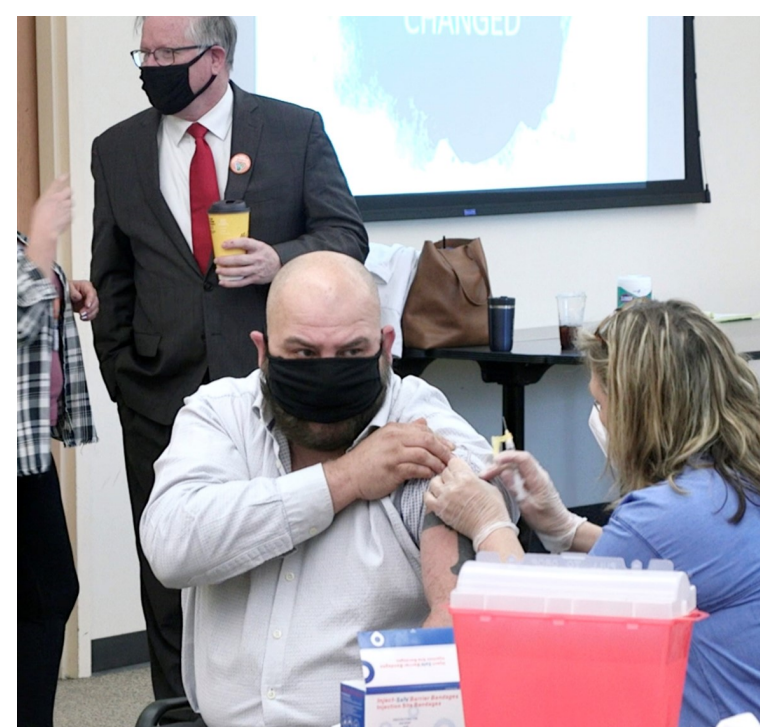
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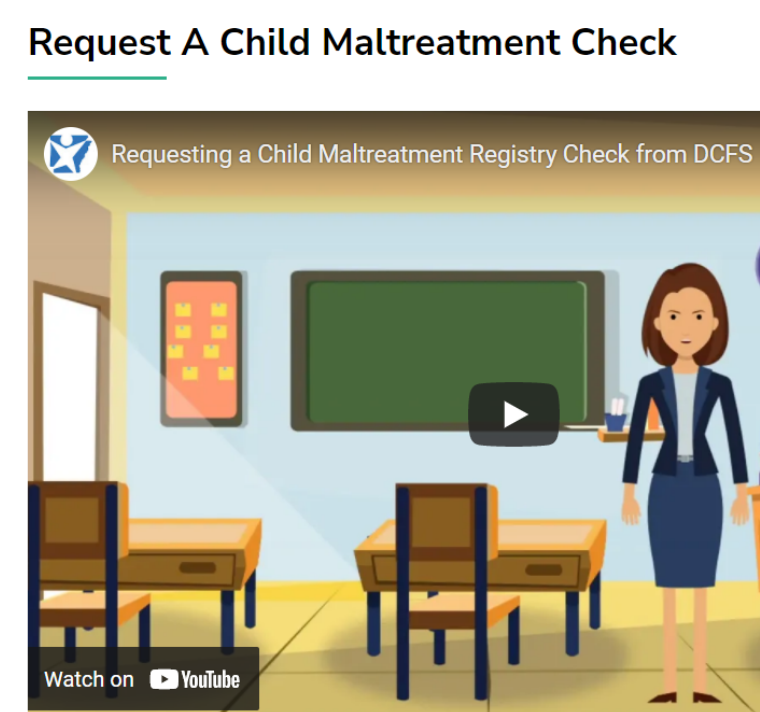
3 Overall Winner for 2021
The overall winner represents the best of DHS teamwork over the year and was chosen among more than 30 nominations.



4 Customer Service



5 Innovation



6 Program Improvement



7 Operational Improvement



8 Quarterly Winners for 2021



Vaccine Distribution & Messaging

Overall Winner

Shot in the Arm

Before vaccines were approved, DHS staff identified needed resources to support a department-wide vaccine effort at our offices and facilities. That required training, places to store vaccines, clinical staff to administer vaccines, and the logistics of the vaccine events. These were all large-scale undertakings that required people from across DHS, across the state, and from other state agencies. Almost every division and shared services office was involved. Vaccination efforts didn't end with staff and residents. DHS coordinated an effort with the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and public and private entities across the state to ensure those who needed inoculation were able to get it. This program has reached out to thousands of Arkansas citizens.

At the same time, there was parallel work going on to create and share factual and engaging information to educate clients, families, and staff about the benefits and safety of the vaccines. DHS mounted a strategic messaging effort using social media, virtual events, and more to encourage employees to get vaccinated and to stay safe. Often there weren't existing videos or materials we could use, so work had to be done from scratch. To date, over 4,500 DHS employees have been vaccinated, or just over 70 percent, according to voluntary data provided by employees.

Participating Divisions & Offices

Arkansas State Hospital, Arkansas Health Center, all Human Development Centers; the Divisions of Aging, Adult, & Behavioral Health Services, County Operations, Developmental Disabilities Services, Children and Family Services, Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Medical Services, Provider Services and Quality Assurance, Youth Services; and the Offices of the Secretary, Communications & Community Engagement, Security and Compliance, Procurement, Finance, Human Resources, Legislative Affairs, and Chief Counsel



Customer Service

Winner

Let the Services Continue

In 2020, COVID-19 precautions and staff shortages prohibited Human Development Center (HDC) residents and staff from participating in beloved activities, events, and services. Still facing COVID-19 risks in 2021, HDC and Division of Developmental Disabilities Services staff identified, planned, and implemented modifications that allowed HDC residents to again experience the fullness of their lives while also boosting employee morale for HDC staff who tirelessly provided high-quality care under trying conditions. These modifications and new experiences focused on reestablishing normal work and training routines for residents as well as hosting favorite and new events, like riding the Conway HDC train with the Easter bunny and holiday parades. Indoor programs were moved outdoors. Campus-wide dances were turned into multiple, smaller events. Residents and staff so enjoyed some of the changes, such as the parades, that they will continue post-pandemic. Staff at all levels of the HDCs worked diligently and tirelessly to ensure residential services were provided at the highest quality and well coordinated. Over the last year, more than 200 employees volunteered to work extra to help out.

Runner-up - New DHS Website

The DHS website was almost 10 years old, difficult for clients to navigate, and not client-centered. A team made up of every division and office gave feedback on a new direction and layout and updated content on the old site so that it could be migrated. The revamp also required many new pages – and new content – to be created. The new site, with over 2,000 pages, launched in January 2021 with a focus on making things easy for clients to navigate and find.

Innovation

Winner

Shot in the Arm

This effort won the overall Susan Burton Team Excellence Award for 2021 in part because of the complexities of the project, the number of individuals who made up the team that helped with the logistical efforts to obtain vaccines, set up clinics, administer vaccines, and share accurate information about vaccines and the COVID-19 virus.

Almost 200 employees from across DHS helped with the efforts to get DHS staff and residential clients vaccinated. Others volunteered their stories and experiences fighting COVID-19 to encourage their co-workers to get vaccinated.

Lessons Learned

- Plan as early as possible and for all scenarios.
- Plan for more people, training, and supplies than you think you need. It's easier to give back than to find more.
- Use every communication channel you have.
- Use trusted messengers to share information and repeat that information often.



Runner-up - Focus on Infections

With COVID-19 came new and critical responsibilities for the Division of Provider Services and Quality Assurance and the Office of Long-Term Care. They began conducting Focused Infection Control surveys with the short-term goal of stopping the spread of COVID-19. These surveys are complex and required staff to hone in on infection control regulations, transmission precautions, testing and reporting protocols, laundry services, the use of personal protective equipment, and hand hygiene. Sometimes, staff donned full protective equipment and visited facilities with active outbreaks. In 2021, over 700 such surveys were conducted along with routine work. The federal government recognized Arkansas for meeting its goal of getting Focused Infection Control surveyors to every licensed skilled nursing facility in the state. This work helped prevent the spread of COVID-19, and likely kept vulnerable nursing home residents from getting seriously ill or dying.

An illustration of a classroom setting. On the left, there is a green chalkboard with the text "REQUESTING a CHILD MALTREATMENT REGISTRY CHECK" written on it in white chalk. In front of the chalkboard is a wooden desk with a blue chair. The background is a light blue wall with a yellow and orange gradient at the top. A large green triangle on the right side of the image contains the text "Program Improvement".

Program Improvement

Winner

Moving Forward: Modernization of Child Maltreatment Checks

The Child Maltreatment Central Registry, maintained by the Division of Children and Family Services, collects records of true child maltreatment cases. Each year, DHS receives over 100,000 requests for child maltreatment background checks as part of a hiring process. Prior to the modernization project, requests were mailed in on paper, hand-written forms. The process took 7-10 business days to complete and then paper results were mailed out. DCFS worked with the Office of Information Technology, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and other shared services offices to create a streamlined, online process. The turnaround time for results went from more than a week to just over 8 hours for unsubstantiated requests and 1.8 days for requests related to true findings. Mailing and copying costs are down, and staff time is being used more efficiently, in part because they are no longer having to decipher hand-written forms.

Runner-up - Game Changer: Adult Maltreatment Registry Scores a Win for DHS and its Stakeholders

Learning from DCFS, Adult Protective Services, the Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Health Services, and the Office of Information Technology worked to build a similar online, electronic process for adult maltreatment background check requests. DHS receives over 42,000 such requests each year and each took at least 7-10 days to process. Now it takes a few hours or a few days at most. Requests and payments are made online.



Operational Improvement

Winner

Recipe for Success

Prior to this project, documentation for seniors and adults in Arkansas with physical disabilities who were getting community-based services so they could stay in their homes was on paper and stored in recipe boxes. Documents, including assessments and service plans, were stored in county offices throughout the state. When conducting an assessment, care plan change, or even a simple care coordination call/visit, the beneficiary's file had to be pulled from the file cabinets from the county offices, which required nurses to be physically in the office or to carry files in their vehicles. Doing so was a privacy risk. The Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Health Services and the Office of Information Technology worked to build an online system that helps work get done faster, prevents delays in services, and is more secure. The system is now accessible from anywhere but has the ability to allow for only authorized access in real-time. In addition, an electronic system allows staff and leadership to compile reports, monitor cases, and measure progress toward identified metrics.

Runner-up - Do You Know What I Know?

Adoption disclosure packets are required by law to be sent out to prospective families. This process was tedious and time-consuming because paper files, some quite voluminous, had to be copied and redacted and then copied again to ensure privacy of the redacted materials. In 2021, 778 adoptions were finalized in Arkansas by DCFS. And many more adoptions, which also required disclosure packets, were disrupted. So DCFS and IT, with the help of the Chief Counsel's office, moved to modernize the process and make it entirely online. The new Electronic Disclosure Packet Portal allows access to the child's redacted records online and breaks down the type of records (educational records, medical records, birth records, etc.) to limit the file size and assist the family in not feeling overwhelmed. Staff no longer have to make copies or keep multiple files, and they now have tools that help with redaction. This has decreased processing time and increased document security.

Quarterly Winners

**We Care. We Act.
We Change Lives.**

Together we improve the quality of life of all Arkansans by protecting the vulnerable, fostering independence, and promoting better health.



Customer Service
Q1 - New DHS Website
Q2 - Critical Staffing ASH
Q3 - Let Services Continue
Q4 - Every Day Counts



Operational Improvement
Q1 - ARIES Health Care Implementation
Q2 - Recipe for Success
Q3 - Do You Know What I Know?
Q4 - DHS Print Media Services Upgrade s & Warehouse Services Expansion



Innovation
Q1 - Shot in the Arm
Q2 -Rapid Launch of Rent Relief
Q3 - Focus on Infections
Q4 - Medicaid Vaccination Program (MVP)

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Program Improvement
Q1 - Modernizing Child Maltreatment Checks
Q2 - Bed, Bath, and Way Beyond
Q3 - Adult Maltreatment Checks
Q4 - ARHome Implementation



THANKS TO ALL THE TEAMS
AT DHS WHO CARE, ACT,
AND CHANGE LIVES