



## NEWS RELEASE

Board of Supervisors

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### Board appoints CaSonya Thomas to lead Human Services

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A director with 25 years of experience in meeting the social service and mental health needs of San Bernardino County residents was appointed on Tuesday by the Board of Supervisors to lead County Human Services.

CaSonya Thomas, director of the Department of Behavioral Health, will succeed Linda Haugan, who is retiring as Assistant Executive Officer of Human Services on Oct. 15 after more than 35 years of service to the County.

Haugan has spent the past 11 years as head of Human Services, a County agency that includes eight departments, more than 6,000 employees, and a \$1.9 billion annual budget. Both Haugan and Thomas began their careers in what is now known as the Transitional Assistance Department as eligibility workers, an entry-level position in County Government. Thomas began her career in 1991.

Their careers illustrate the County's successful efforts – mandated by the Board of Supervisors – to identify and develop talent from within the County organization, and ensure the County maintains a bench of qualified managers and executives to promote when vacancies occur. This practice will allow a nearly three-month transition for Thomas to work closely with Haugan before assuming her new role.

"It is an honor to receive this appointment, which comes with a tremendous responsibility to the people of San Bernardino County," Thomas said. "Each day, Human Services changes lives through a number of programs and services, and we will remain committed to our Countywide Vision to build healthier communities by strengthening individuals and families, enhancing quality of life and valuing people."

Thomas has held a number of positions within Human Services over the course of her 25-year County career, including Director of Behavioral Health and executive and management positions within Human Services. Under Thomas' leadership, Behavioral Health played a key role in the County's efforts to assist the survivors of the Dec. 2, 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernardino and the families of those who died.

"CaSonya Thomas is an outstanding employee and an asset to the county. As the newly appointed Assistant Executive Officer for Human Services, Ms. Thomas will bring professionalism and expertise that will continue to strengthen the County of San Bernardino," said Board of Supervisors Chairman and Third District Supervisor James Ramos.

"CaSonya has proven herself as a successful and well-qualified leader for this position. Her experience, hard work and professionalism will serve our residents and the County well," said Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman and First District Supervisor Robert Lovingood.

"It was a privilege to appoint Ms. Thomas as the Director of the Department of Behavioral Health in 2012, and I am thrilled to now support her appointment as the Assistant Executive Officer for Human Services," said Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales. "I am so pleased to see her succeed and I have no doubt she'll continue to do a remarkable job."

"CaSonya has consistently demonstrated her commitment to the well-being of all county residents," said Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford. "Her intelligence, compassion and creativity are perfectly suited to the challenges we face."

Haugan assumed the reins of Human Services in July 2005 after an already-notable career that included the implementation of the landmark C-IV Statewide Automated Welfare System. Her first order of business as Human Services chief was to successfully and dramatically reduce the County's food stamp error rate.

Throughout her tenure, Haugan has fostered collaboration between Human Services departments to improve services to the public, a practice that has made the County a consistent leader in winning national and state awards for innovative and effective programs.

"I have had the good fortune of working with many talented people who carry out their public service mission with passion and intelligence. That's why I feel I am leaving Human Services in a very good state and in very good hands," Haugan said.

Thomas has a bachelor's degree in business administration and a post-graduate degree in public administration, both from California State University, San Bernardino. She is also certified in healthcare compliance by the national Health Care Compliance Association.

Thomas serves as president-elect to the County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California (CBHDA), whose goals include advocating and developing public policy agendas that support access to necessary quality services that promote behavioral health and wellness, and resiliency and recovery in communities. She also is co-chair of the CBHDA Cultural Competence, Equity and Social Justice Committee.

Human Services departments, divisions and offices include Aging and Adult Services, Animal Care and Control, Behavioral Health, Child Support Services, Children and Family Services, Children's Network, Environmental Health Services, Homeless Services, Preschool Services, Public Health, Transitional Assistance and Veterans Affairs.