

# News Release

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## **Governor Ducey Names Don Herrington As Interim ADHS Director, Taps Richard Carmona As Senior Public Health Advisor**

**PHOENIX** — Governor Doug Ducey today named Don Herrington, a 21-year veteran of the Arizona Department of Health Services, to succeed Dr. Cara Christ and oversee the frontline health care workers who have spearheaded the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[The Governor and Herrington together](#) named Dr. Richard Carmona, the 17th Surgeon General of the United States, to serve as the senior advisor on public health emergency preparedness and lead a statewide effort to boost vaccine and public health awareness in Arizona.

“Arizona couldn't have two more dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced public health professionals at the helm of the Department of Health Services,” Governor Ducey said. “With Don directing day-to-day operations and Dr. Carmona marshalling our resources to defeat this virus and get Arizonans vaccinated, I'm confident we just got a lot closer to putting the pandemic behind us.”

Herrington currently serves as the department's Deputy Director for Planning and Operations. In this role he oversees policy development, hiring professional and support staff and the department's budget.

“I am grateful for Governor Ducey's confidence in my abilities to lead ADHS,” said Herrington. “We have an extraordinary group of individuals at the department and I'm honored to lead this team. I look forward to promoting and protecting the health of everyone who calls Arizona home.”

Prior to serving as Deputy Director, Herrington served as Assistant Director of Public Health Preparedness and Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control Services. He served on numerous councils, commissions and committees on behalf of the Director of ADHS, including Chair of the Arizona Sanitarians' Council, Chair of the Arizona Infection Prevention and Control Advisory Committee, and as one of five voting members of the Arizona Emergency Response Commission.

“Don's leadership at ADHS and depth of knowledge of the department's core functions make him well suited to serve as interim director,” Governor Ducey said. “Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't thank Dr. Christ for her extraordinary service and leadership, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Don has big shoes to fill, but I know that he's up for the challenge.”

Dr. Carmona is a longtime Tucson resident who served as the 17th Surgeon General of the United States from 2002 to 2006. He is the Distinguished Professor of Public Health at University of Arizona's Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health and most recently served as the director of the University of Arizona [COVID Response Team](#).

“I am honored Governor Ducey is entrusting me with this position,” said Dr. Carmona. “We have

made a tremendous amount of progress but we still have much to do. There is no doubt in my mind that we are on the right track and that the single best way to crush COVID is with the vaccine and public health mitigation strategies. I'm eager to take on the challenge. COVID is the common enemy and all of us need to work together to defeat it. The state's response to this global health emergency has been top-notch, and I look forward to building on Dr. Christ and her team's success."

Prior to serving as Surgeon General, Dr. Carmona held numerous public health positions in southern Arizona, including Chief Executive Officer of the Pima County Health Care System, Chairman of the State of Arizona Southern Regional Emergency Medical System and Medical Director of the Arizona DPS Air Rescue Units and the Rural Metro Corporation.

Dr. Carmona enlisted in the Army in 1967 at the age of 17 as a high school dropout. After leaving the Army's Special Forces as a combat decorated Vietnam Veteran, he earned his Associate of Arts Degree from Bronx Community College of the City University of New York. He later graduated from the University of California, San Francisco with a Bachelor of Science Degree and Medical Degree where he was awarded the Gold-Headed Cane as the top Medical School graduate.

Dr. Carmona's unique upbringing has given him a keen understanding of underserved communities and a strong commitment to serving those in need. As a child living in the Harlem section of New York, Carmona was [homeless](#) for a time, and learned many skills he would later need to lead a public health organization from his experiences and his "[abuelita](#)," who he said taught him more about community service than anybody else.

"Dr. Carmona's accomplishments are well known in Arizona," Governor Ducey said. "He has a deep understanding of the health issues facing our state and his wealth of experience at all levels of government make him well suited to lead the state's ongoing efforts to get the lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine into the arms of every Arizonan who wants it."

## **BACKGROUND**

On July 28, Governor Ducey [announced](#) Arizona Department of Health Services Director Dr. Cara Christ, who has been instrumental in the state's COVID-19 response, will leave her position on August 27 for another leadership role as chief medical officer for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona.

Dr. Christ has led the Department as director since May 2015 after serving as chief medical officer, licensing director and deputy director of public health for the department since 2008. She is the longest-serving director in the history of the department.