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American Samoa Highlights Healthcare Collaboration at NGA Health and Human Services Institute

The National Governors Association (NGA) held its annual Health and Human Services Institute in Atlanta, Georgia, from August 27-29. Representing American Samoa at the event were Public Policy Advisor Patrick Reid and Special Projects Manager Dr. Siniva Mann from the Office of the Governor. The three-day institute featured plenary discussions and concurrent breakout sessions on key topics such as healthcare workforce development, maternal and child health, mental and behavioral health, workplace support, disease forecasting, emergency preparedness, and the integration of AI technology to improve benefits delivery across health and human services.

American Samoa was highlighted during the Advisor Roundtable Discussion for its initial efforts in uniting local healthcare stakeholders to strategize around healthcare workforce development and the establishment of the Healthcare Workforce Development Advisory Council via Executive Order 005-24 signed by Governor Lemanu on July 15th. Mr. Reid and Dr. Mann had the opportunity to discuss how American Samoa has corralled local healthcare stakeholders working collaboratively to address long standing emerging healthcare workforce and maternal and child health.

Dr. Mann emphasized that open communication and fostering a collaborative environment were critical to aligning stakeholders and addressing shared challenges. She emphasized the importance of focusing on the desired outcomes and the impact on the residents of American Samoa when uniting various initiatives. Mr. Reid highlighted the importance of data and centralized systems that enable data analysis and sharing to enhance service delivery across all sectors, noting that this presents a significant opportunity for American Samoa's overall development, including the healthcare sector.

The discussions at the institute were both impactful and inspiring for all states and territories in attendance. A key highlight of the institute was the representation of all U.S. territories, providing a platform for diverse perspectives and the exchange of ideas between territories and states. The American Samoa Government's active participation in the NGA continues to provide valuable policy resources, technical assistance, and best practices, contributing to the advancement of local healthcare governance & strategic planning.

Program Directors and staff of the National Governors Association (NGA) and Association visited American Samoa for the first time in July to facilitate stakeholder action planning and provide insight into national trends and best practices ahead of the first Healthcare Workforce Advisory Council meeting.

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