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NABIP Honors Industry Leaders and Innovators at 2026 Gordon Awards Gala

Bruce Benton Receives Association's Highest Honor; HRASimple Recognized as Visionary Trailblazer

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — The National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP) honored outstanding leaders, innovators, and dedicated volunteers during its annual Gordon Awards Gala held June 29 as part of NABIP's 96th Annual Convention in Atlantic City.

The evening celebrated individuals and organizations whose leadership, service, and innovation have strengthened the health insurance profession and advanced NABIP's mission of serving agents, brokers, employers, and consumers nationwide.

Harold R. Gordon Memorial Award

Bruce Benton

NABIP's highest honor, the Harold R. Gordon Memorial Award, was presented to Bruce Benton in recognition of his lifetime of service and extraordinary contributions to the health insurance industry and the association.

For more than 25 years, Benton has served NABIP and its predecessor organization, NAHU, in leadership roles at the local, state, regional, and national levels. His service culminated as National President in 2012–2013, when he helped guide the association through the early implementation of the Affordable Care Act—one of the most transformative periods in the industry's history.

Today, Benton continues his commitment to the association as Chair of the NABIP Governance Committee while also returning to serve as President of the Los Angeles chapter. Throughout his career, he has been recognized as a trusted mentor, thoughtful leader, and passionate advocate for health insurance professionals and the consumers they serve.

"Bruce Benton embodies the very best of servant leadership," said Susan Rider, NABIP President. "His unwavering commitment to our members, his thoughtful leadership during pivotal moments in our industry's history, and his dedication to mentoring future leaders have left an immeasurable impact on NABIP. We are proud to recognize his lifetime of service with our highest honor."

Trailblazer Award

HRASimple

NABIP presented its second annual Trailblazer Award to HRASimple for its pioneering leadership in the Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA) marketplace.

Since ICHRAs became available, HRASimple has helped shape the industry's evolution through innovation, education, advocacy, and operational excellence. The company onboarded one of the nation's first ICHRA clients on the program's launch day, co-authored NABIP's ICHRA Certification course, served on the CMS/CCIIO ICHRA Working Group, and has provided expert testimony before Congress and state legislatures on expanding affordable healthcare options.

Today, HRASimple continues to push the industry forward through innovative technology and large-scale ICHRA administration, helping employers deliver more personalized health benefits to thousands of employees nationwide.

"The Trailblazer Award recognizes organizations that aren't simply adapting to change—they're creating it," Rider said. "HRASimple has played a defining role in the growth and success of the ICHRA marketplace, and their leadership continues to influence the future of employer-sponsored healthcare."

Ambassador of Membership Award

Jennifer Lowery

The Ambassador of Membership Award was presented to Jennifer Lowery in recognition of her outstanding commitment to growing and strengthening NABIP membership through leadership, engagement, and member advocacy.

Emerging Leader Award

Ashley Wong

The Emerging Leader Award was presented to Ashley Wong, recognizing her exceptional leadership, commitment to the profession, and tremendous potential as one of NABIP's rising leaders.

Distinguished Service Award

Jennifer Lowery and Charlene Hogeland

NABIP also presented its Distinguished Service Award to Jennifer Lowery and Charlene Hogeland in recognition of their exceptional volunteer leadership, dedication to the association, and significant contributions to advancing NABIP's mission.

"Each of tonight's honorees represents the passion, professionalism, and commitment that define our association," Rider said. "Whether through decades of volunteer leadership, groundbreaking innovation, or emerging excellence, these award recipients are helping shape the future of our profession and inspiring the next generation of benefits and insurance professionals."

The awards were presented during the Gordon Awards Gala at NABIP's 96th Annual Convention, where hundreds of health insurance and benefit professionals from across the country gathered for education, networking, and advocacy.

2026 NABIP Award Recipients

- **Harold R. Gordon Memorial Award:** Bruce Benton
- **Trailblazer Award:** HRASimple
- **Ambassador of Membership Award:** Jennifer Lowery
- **Emerging Leader Award:** Ashley Wong
- **Distinguished Service Award:** Jennifer Lowery
- **Distinguished Service Award:** Charlene Hogeland

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[NABIP](#) is the preeminent organization for health insurance and employee benefits professionals, working diligently to ensure all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable healthcare and related benefits. NABIP represents and provides professional development opportunities for more than 100,000 licensed health insurance agents, brokers, general agents, consultants and benefit professionals through more than 150 chapters across America.