

WebMD Announces 2021 Health Heroes: Frontline workers, a teenage entrepreneur, and a former fashion executive who are making a difference in communities impacted by COVID-19

Dr. Anthony Fauci receives Lifetime Achievement Award

New York, New York, March 30, 2021 – WebMD today announced the winners of the [2021 WebMD Health Heroes Awards](#), which this year recognize the contributions of individuals working tirelessly on the frontlines of the pandemic.

Now in its 14th year, the awards honor the everyday heroes who risk their own health and safety to make a difference in communities impacted by COVID-19.

WebMD's editorial team, composed of board-certified health care professionals and award-winning journalists, selects the recipients. The winners are featured in a special edition of the April/May/June issue of *WebMD Magazine*.

The WebMD 2021 Health Heroes are:

Frontline Champions Award: Essential workers nationwide

WebMD recognized the contributions of the nation's essential workers with a grant to the CDC Foundation, a nonprofit organization supporting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's health protection work. The CDC Foundation through their donors provided personal protective equipment (PPE), surge staff and other critical supplies to frontline workers throughout the pandemic.

These essential workers are "the backbone of our society," says Judy Monroe, MD, president and CEO of the CDC Foundation. "They're called essential workers because honestly, society doesn't function without them."

Lifetime Achievement: Anthony Fauci, MD, Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

As the nation's top infectious disease expert, Fauci, who joined President Joe Biden's administration this year as chief medical adviser, has led efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and Zika as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Still, he says he's never seen anything quite like the novel coronavirus.

That the outbreak hit right in the middle of a divisive election year only added to the difficulty of containing it. As unimaginably dark as the pandemic has been, there have also been bright spots. Three vaccines have been developed, approved, and rolled out and into millions of arms

within a matter of months—an effort that would have previously taken 7 to 10 years. According to Fauci, the combination of vaccines and widespread adherence to public health measures such as mask wearing and social distancing will finally “end the outbreak as we know it.” However, he knows that the threat of infectious disease outbreaks will continue into the future.

“The better prepared we are to address a pandemic,” he says, “the less likelihood that we will get an outbreak of the magnitude that we’re seeing now.”

Trailblazer Award: Amy Denet Deal (formerly Amy Yeung), Founder, Orenda Tribe clothing company, Navajo Nation Diné Tribe, New Mexico

A highly sought-after fashion executive in Los Angeles, Denet Deal moved to New Mexico to reintegrate with her Navajo Nation tribe (Diné) after her daughter graduated high school, and she was shocked by the lack of basic infrastructure and access to food (nearly one-third of Navajo homes are without running water, 15,000 lack electricity, and there are only 13 supermarkets serving an area of 27,000 square miles.)

When COVID-19 hit, Denet Deal realized she had the skills to fill some of her community’s critical needs. She transitioned her upcycled clothing company, Orenda Tribe, to manufacturing face masks, and called in connections at companies like Patagonia and Outdoor Voices for fabric. To finance her efforts, Denet Deal solicited donations and held fundraisers, including one with the Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Jewel, raising enough to fund 42,000 care boxes for the children of the Diné community and their families.

Over the last eight months, Denet Deal and the group of female volunteers who make up her Dził Asdzáán (Mountain Woman) Command Center have raised more than \$835,000 and have distributed more than 1 million PPE units and 1 million servings of food.

Innovator Award: Taft Foley III, Entrepreneur and High School Student, Houston

In the summer of 2020, 17-year-old Taft Foley III became the youngest EMT in Texas, caring for many desperately sick COVID-19 patients in the back of an ambulance. But before starting his work as an EMT, he had to get a COVID-19 test, which typically demanded a three- to four-hour wait at one of the state's testing centers, and then two weeks to get results. During his quarantine, he decided there had to be a better way.

Foley went on to raise \$60,000 (by selling his vintage comic books and video game collection and doing yard work in the neighborhood, among other things), which his father matched, and used the money to buy a van and testing supplies. While finishing his senior year of high school,

he spends 20 hours a week working in his Texas Mobile Medical Labs vehicle, bringing 15-minute COVID-19 tests to anyone in the Houston area who needs one. He charges a \$150 fee to those who can pay.

A portion of that fee goes to fund free tests for the elderly, homeless, and veterans in the community. To date, the business has provided more than 4,000 free tests.

For additional information on the 2021 WebMD Health Heroes, click here:

<https://www.webmd.com/healthheroes/default.htm>

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Media Contact:

Patricia Garrison, pgarrison@webmd.net, 212-624-3885