

# **Primary Care Workforce Pipeline Development Plan**

**Nevada Health Care Workforce and Pipeline  
Development Workgroup**

**2023**

With support from

**Nevada's Division of Public and Behavioral Health, DHHS  
Center for Public Health Excellence, School of Public Health, UNR  
High Sierra AHEC**



## Background

The Nevada Health Care Workforce and Pipeline Development Workgroup aims to improve, grow, and diversify Nevada’s public health, behavioral health, and primary care workforces and workforce pipelines to ensure the state has a workforce capable of meeting current and future health care needs.

It brings together stakeholders representing public health, behavioral health, primary care, traditional workforce development, K-12 and higher education, minority health and equity, and community-based organizations throughout the state to:

1. Enhance education and awareness of workforce development initiatives in Nevada, connect non-traditional partners, identify opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, and maximize resources statewide;
2. Identify and map workforce pipeline development initiatives in K-12 education, higher education, and the current workforce; and
3. Create and implement workforce pipeline development plans for public health, behavioral health, and primary care.

The Workgroup established three subcommittees—one each for public health, behavioral health, and primary care (with a focus on rural and underserved areas)—to focus on workforce pipeline development within its specific subsector of the health care workforce.

Throughout 2022, the Workgroup and its subcommittees met monthly to pursue the goals above and develop their subsector-specific plans to improve the workforce.

## Primary Care Workforce Pipeline Development Plan

This Primary Care Workforce Pipeline Development Plan was developed by the Primary Care Subcommittee of the Nevada Health Care Workforce and Pipeline Development Workgroup. The Subcommittee is comprised of representatives of a variety of sectors, including individuals from the following organizations and agencies:

- Comagine Health
- High Sierra AHEC
- Nevada Public Health Institute
- Nevada Hospital Association
- Nevada Primary Care Association
- Nevada Rural Hospital Partners
- Nevada State Medical Association
- Nye County Communities Coalition
- Office of Rural Health
- Perry Foundation
- University of Nevada Reno, Medical School
- Washoe County Health District

The Plan identifies a clear vision for the primary care workforce in Nevada, as well as specific goals, objectives, and strategies to work toward the vision. Among these are efforts to improve empower Nevada students and increase early exposure to professional opportunities in primary care, increasing primary care workforce training and teaching capacity, and establishing the Subcommittee as a credible subject matter expert.

Strategies are divided into three categories: short-term (0-3 months), medium-term (3-12 months), and long-term (12-24 months).

The Primary Care Workforce Pipeline Development Plan is a living document that will be revised by the Primary Care Subcommittee to include new workforce development activities and reflect changes in existing strategies as appropriate.

## Vision for the Primary Care Workforce

- *Nevada is the state of choice for primary care educators, providers, and clinical support staff.*
- *Nevada is adequately staffed with primary care teams who work collaboratively and provide access to quality care that meets the diverse health and social needs of our communities; 24/7 and despite geographic location.*
- *Nevada students, within K-12, who express an interest in health care careers are supported throughout the continuum and are provided with comprehensive resources to understand career choices and opportunities for advancement.*

## Definition of Primary Care

For the purposes of this plan, primary care is defined as the provision of integrated and accessible health care services by interdisciplinary care teams who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal and preventative health care needs while improving health outcomes, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community.

## Primary Care Team

For the purposes of this plan, the primary care team includes:

- Physicians, Advanced Practice Providers; Physician Assistants, and Nurse Practitioners
- Nurses (RN, LPN, CNA)
- Pharmacists
- Dentists
- Technologists and technicians
- Therapists and rehabilitation specialists/Behavioral Health
- Social workers / emotional, social, and spiritual support providers
- Administrative and support staff
- Community Health Workers, Patient Navigators, Case Managers
- Medical Assistants
- Physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologist
- Emergency Medical Services, Paramedicine

## Goals, Objectives and Strategies

**Goal 1:** Empower Nevada students in K-12, with early exposure to Primary Care: A Priority for Career Development

**Objective 1:** *Clearly articulate the many roles associated with primary care teams and highlight opportunities for career advancement.*

### Short Term Strategies (0-3 months)

- Identify county school districts in highest need of health care career exploration programming and leverage existing resources to provide services (High Sierra AHEC Curriculum Hub and Resource Library, Virtual Programming, connection to local resources and partners).
- Develop a primary care career pipeline pathway graphic. Start with traditional primary care pathways and move on to non-traditional pathways.

### Medium Term Strategies (3-12 months)

- Expand primary care career education, outreach, and engagement in K-12 (and beyond), building on existing efforts and resources, and targeting rural and underserved communities.
- Distribute primary care pipeline pathways graphics regularly through traditional and non-traditional partners, including those working with young people in K-12, vocational training, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and employers.
- Pursue HRSA's Health Careers Opportunities Program, bringing federal funding back to Nevada, and supporting projects designed to increase and support opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter health professions.
- Enhance the biennial publication of the Nevada Health Care Careers Manual (23-24 Revisions) to include opportunities for advancement through the provision of continued education (i.e. career ladder opportunities; CNA to RN).

**Objective 2:** *Increase the understanding and utilization of culturally competent interdisciplinary care teams and their role within primary care practice settings.*

### Medium Term Strategies (3-12 months):

- **Expand** Interprofessional Education (IPE) competencies and standards within health-focused student programs (i.e. K-12 Health Science Programs/Career and Technical Education, AHEC Student Ambassadors, Nevada AHEC Scholars).
- **Expand** Cultural Competency and standards within health-focused student programs (i.e. K-12 Health Science Programs/Career and Technical Education, AHEC Student Ambassadors, Nevada AHEC Scholars).

### **Long Term Strategies (12-24 months)**

- Understand how health care professional students are exposed to primary care and interdisciplinary care teams; are we exposing them to a care model that is exciting, community-engaged, and centered on families and multiple professionals working together.
    - Leverage the AHEC Scholars Program to further promote scholarly concentrations in health profession schools, specifically Bio and Pre-Med Students.
    - Assess what is currently happening in the health profession schools in the area of IPE EMS, MA, CNA as a pathway to PA School and Nursing School.
    - Community Health Worker pathway for upward mobilization after continued education, on the job training, and additional certifications.
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**Goal 2:** Increase primary care workforce training and teaching capacity.

*Objective 1: Expand Nevada's capacity to address health care faculty workforce shortages.*

### **Short Term Strategies (0-3 months)**

- Review and advocate for AB 38 (Assembly Committee on Revenue), an Act relating to economic development; requiring any money remaining in the Workforce Innovations for a New Nevada Account at the end of a fiscal year be carried forward to the next fiscal year and not revert to the State General Fund.
- Review and advocate for BDR 352 (Joint Interim Standing Committee on Commerce and Labor) NRS 218E.320 which expands the institutions which certain recipients of the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarships are authorized to attend.
- Review and advocate for AB 45 (Assembly Committee on Government Affairs) which creates a program to repay the student education loans of certain providers of health care.
- Review and advocate for AB 108 (Committee of Commerce and Labor) relating to nursing; enacting and entering into the Nurse Licensure Compact; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.
- Review and advocate for AB 267 (Committee of Commerce and Labor) which revises provisions governing cultural competency training.

### **Medium Term Strategies (3-12 months)**

- Request the Governor/NSHE/Nevada State Legislature to allocate additional funding to address the following:
  - Shortage of faculty, clinical instructors, and preceptors in NSHE nursing programs;

- Low salaries of nursing faculty and clinical instructors in NSHE nursing programs as compared to nurses employed in hospitals and other patient care settings.

**Objective 2:** *Revise the Nevada Health Service Corp Loan Repayment Program to increase its usage and broaden the criteria for eligibility*

**Short Term Strategies (0-3 months)**

- Review and advocate for AB 69 during the 2023 Legislative Session which revises provisions governing economic development. Expands the loan repayment program administered by the Nevada Health Service Corps to include certain providers of behavioral health care.

**Medium Term Strategies (3-12 months)**

- Expand awareness and use of the Nevada Health Service Corp Loan Repayment Program by primary care providers and practice settings as an incentive to improve recruitment and retention of staff. This state supported program forgives loans after 2 years of full-time employment.

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**Goal 3:** Establish the primary care subcommittee as a highly respected and credible subject matter expert through the delivery of insightful and informative engagement and strategic collaboration with industry leaders and stakeholders.

**Objective 1:** *Enhance collective education of the subcommittee.*

**Short Term Strategies (0-3 months)**

- Research and understand localized opportunities to engage retired professionals, beginning with requesting a presentation from Volunteers in Medicine (Southern Nevada entity).
- Understand untapped Immigrant talent pool as a solution to workforce needs and improvements to culturally competent care with the intention of creating formal involvement, beginning with a presentation the Office of New Americans.

**Medium Term Strategies (3-12 months)**

- Engage with the Good Jobs Northern Nevada Health Care Roundtables to understand healthcare employer perspectives on high demand industry credentials, certifications, recruitment strategies, employment equity.

**Objective 2:** *Provide recommendations on areas of expertise to enhance/improve workforce development across sub-sectors*

**Short Term Strategies (0-3 months)**

- Make recommendations that enhance employers' awareness of existing incentives supporting skills training and upward mobility [i.e. recommend DETR serves as technical assistant and consultant between employers and programs (Incumbent Worker Training Program and Good Jobs Northern Nevada)].

**Medium Term Strategies (3-12 months):**

- Formulate recommendation to the Community Health Worker Association to enhance community and employer education and awareness through: resource guides, handouts, roundtables, community presence, etc. of the role and importance of CHWs
- Educate on and seek opportunities to provide scholarships to medical students (and other programs/specialties) with a required repayment period of time in coordination with the medical schools and other academic programs during the interim session.



## **Acknowledgements**

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**High Sierra Area Health Education Center (AHEC)** is a 501c3 public health non-profit organization, affiliated with the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, dedicated to recruiting, developing, and strengthening the future healthcare workforce of Nevada. It is committed to providing equitable and comprehensive opportunities; engaging in outreach that exposes young people from groups underrepresented in the healthcare workforce to role models and mentors; further inspiring their pursuit and tangibility of a healthcare career. High Sierra AHEC's nationally recognized programs target first-generation, low-income, and rural students in a six-county area, including Carson, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, and Washoe Counties.

**The Center for Public Health Excellence, UNR School of Public Health** works to improve the health of all Nevadans by leading efforts to grow and diversify the public health workforce; facilitating and formalizing partnerships between public health agencies and institutions of higher education; working with public health authorities to improve quality and performance; and raising awareness among policymakers about the importance of public health and key policy challenges.

## **For More Information**

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