



University of Nevada, Reno
School of Medicine
Office of Statewide Initiatives

October 16, 2024

Nevada Patient Protection Commission
Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
1000 North Division Street
Carson City, NV 89703

Dear Nevada Patient Protection Commission Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center in the Office of Statewide Initiatives at the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine to express support for the Nevada Nursing Workforce Center (NNWC). The creation of the NNWC is vital to addressing the urgent nursing workforce shortages, which my office highlighted in our December 2022 white paper, “Addressing Nevada’s Nursing Workforce Shortages: A Call to Action.”

The nursing shortage in Nevada poses a significant threat to healthcare access and quality and imposes substantial costs to both healthcare providers and the public. Addressing current and projected nursing workforce shortages will require state policymakers to prioritize and implement evidence-based policy measures and strategies. Some measures will necessitate new or expanded general fund support from the state legislature for NSHE nursing programs, while others will require policy changes to existing state laws or administrative and licensing regulations for nursing education and health facilities.

Successful strategies will demand greater collaboration and coordination among state policymakers and diverse nursing workforce stakeholders. Strategies include expanding public funding for NSHE nursing programs, supporting innovative higher education-industry partnerships, and developing career pathways within the health professions. A NNWC provides ideal platform for developing and implementing these strategies through collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

Our analysis at the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center reveals that Nevada needs over four thousand additional registered nurses to meet the national average. Furthermore, a significant portion of our population resides in health professional shortage areas, with 67% of Nevadans lacking adequate access to primary medical care and nearly 2.8 million residents in mental health shortage areas. Addressing these shortages is essential to improving population health and reducing health disparities.

Office of Statewide Initiatives
University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine
604 West Moana Lane
Reno, Nevada 89509
<https://med.unr.edu/statewide>

I urge the Nevada Patient Protection Commission to support a Nevada Nursing Workforce Center. This center will play a pivotal role in increasing the supply of registered nurses, enhancing the diversity of the nursing workforce, and addressing the geographic maldistribution of healthcare professionals in our state. By investing in this initiative, we can ensure that Nevada's healthcare system remains resilient and capable of meeting the evolving needs of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration. I believe that a Nevada Nursing Workforce Center is a crucial step towards addressing the nursing shortage in our state and improving healthcare access and quality for Nevadans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Packham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Packham".

John Packham, PhD
Associate Dean, Office of Statewide Initiatives