



**Nevada Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSHA)  
NSHA/NV Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages**

October 18, 2024

To: Members of the Nevada Patient Protections Commission (PPC)

From: Nancy Kuhles, Co-Chair NSHA Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages; member of High Sierra AHEC Board of Directors

Regarding: Recommendations to Address the Health Care Workforce Shortage in the State of Nevada

Dear Chair Khan and Members of the Nevada Patient Protection Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my support and the Nevada Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NSHA) Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services support of the recommendations to address Nevada's growing health care workforce shortage. Specifically the recommendation to increase state funding for Nevada's Area Health Education Centers (AHECs), including High Sierra, Desert Meadows, and Frontier AHEC. The increase in state funding for Nevada's AHECs will enhance the statewide health care workforce development pipeline efforts for the benefit of all Nevadans.

My name is Nancy Kuhles. I am a Speech-Language Pathologist, Co-Chair of the NSHA Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages, and member of the High Sierra AHEC Board of Directors.

The work and on-going goals of the NSHA Coalition aligns with High Sierra AHEC's primary mission and initiatives. For over 10 years the NSHA Coalition has collaborated and partnered with High Sierra AHEC to support the recruitment, retention, and training of future and current professionals in the health, helping and education professions. The NSHA Coalition's "Get the Word Out" campaign focuses on recruiting middle school, high school, college, and university students into one of the nine identified professional areas of need for future employment in Nevada school districts and early intervention programs to meet their personnel demands in various special education and related service positions. The campaign addresses careers in the "education, health, and helping" professions, specifically educational audiology, nursing, counseling, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology, social work, speech-language pathology, and special education.

Together, the NSHA Coalition and High Sierra AHEC have made great strides with shared goals and initiatives, however; Nevada continues to face a critical shortage of school-based health, helping and education professionals. Of particular importance to the NSHA Coalition's and High Sierra AHEC's collaborative work is the increased shortages of the six school-based health professionals – school-based allied health professionals that include educational audiologists,



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nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, and speech-language pathologists. The continued widespread shortages of health care professionals impedes access to health care in all practice settings statewide.

Nevada's Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) play a vital role in developing a robust and diverse health care workforce in all practice settings, particularly for underserved and rural communities.

Nevada's AHECs can serve as a strong partner to help strengthen partnerships with healthcare providers and organizations in rural and underserved areas to create sustainable workforce solutions.

The current funding constraints limit Nevada's AHECs to expand and innovate to meet the rising demand for health care professionals in all practice settings. Increased funding would allow Nevada's AHECs to strengthen and scale their pipeline programs, partnerships, and training opportunities statewide.

On behalf of the NSHA Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages, and as a member of the High Sierra AHEC Board of Directors, I respectfully request your support of the recommendation to increase state funding for Nevada's Area Health Education Centers (AHECs), including High Sierra, Desert Meadows, and Frontier AHEC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy L. Kuhles".

Nancy L. Kuhles, M.S. CCC-SLP  
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