

Rural Nevada Health Network

Healthy Communities Coalition, P.O. Box 1865, Dayton, NV 89403

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Deborah Loesch-Griffin, Ph.D., Convener • deb.turningpoint@gmail.com

Noël Chounet, Network Director, noel@hcclsc.org



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Dear Nevada Patient Protection Commission Chair and Commissioners,

Over the past decade, the Rural Nevada Health Network (RNHN) has met to identify and take collective action on key priorities aligned with our vision and mission. Our vision is “Nevada’s rural communities are supported by a health economy where its health and wellness systems are equitable, accessible, and affordable for all.” To achieve this, RNHN creates, mobilizes and supports systems-based healthcare solutions with a focus on advocacy for an integrated, efficient and effective health and wellness system across rural Nevada, including our tribal communities.

We have successfully promoted and supported legislation in the past to ensure Community Health Workers (CHWs) are a key component of Nevada’s workforce development strategy for primary, mental/behavioral health provider careers. Currently, our network is focusing on workforce development (WFD) for a broad array of healthcare providers needed to meet the demand of our rural communities. We are supporting partners with initiatives that provide WFD services, training and support to grow and enhance Nevada’s *rural* and *tribal* healthcare workforce along with the workforce shortages across the state. Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), particularly High Sierra AHEC, have been a crucial player in addressing workforce shortages, working with students as they start school in the K-12 system all the way through graduate programs in our colleges and universities. It is very important to RNHN that we “grow our own” and identify children, youth and adults who reside in our rural communities that have an ongoing commitment to return and work in these communities as healthcare providers. The AHECs support this effort as well.

RNHN has a growing membership of over 100 community-based agencies and organizations and statewide entities who engage in person, virtually, and/or as part of our workgroups on a monthly and quarterly basis. We had many of our partners engaged in the Nevada Health Care Workforce & Pipeline Development Workgroup, funded from DPBH, and co-led by the Larson Center for Public Health Excellence and High Sierra Area Health Education Center (AHEC) who continue to participate in statewide workgroups.

As part of our ongoing efforts, on behalf of the RNHN Lead Partners (see list below), we ask that you give strong consideration to the request for funding to support AHECs’ workforce development efforts, a commitment that would demonstrate that rural and tribal communities and people are valued and deserve the support they need to get and stay healthy.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deborah Loesch-Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Deborah" being the most prominent.

Deborah Loesch-Griffin
RNHN Convener
Turning Point, Inc.

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RNHN Lead Partners:

1. Regional Behavioral Health Boards – Cherylyn Rahr Wood
2. Dignity Health- Richard Davis
3. Nevada Rural Hospital Partners- Blayne Osborne
4. Office of Rural Health- Gerald Ackerman
5. AHEC- Andrea Gregg
6. Community Chest, Inc.- Erik Schoen
7. Healthy Communities Coalition- Wendy Madson
8. Nevada Primary Care Association- Steve Messinger
9. PACE Coalition- Laura Oslund
10. Comagine- Eileen Colen
11. NAMI Nevada-Laura Yanez