



Office of Governor Steve Sisolak

May 19, 2020

Sent via e-mail

Chair Packham, Members of the Nevada Patient Protection Commission, and Executive Director Chohagian:

I am writing to request the assistance of Nevada's Patient Protection Commission in our state's response to and long-term recovery from the impact of COVID-19. As you are all acutely aware, this pandemic has challenged the public and private health care systems around the world, and Nevada is no exception. At this time, Nevada has been able to mitigate the spread of the virus through early intervention with strict social distancing protocols; business closures; health care providers and facilities limiting essential services, including medically necessary procedures; and many health care insurers expanding coverage options to include access to testing and treatment. Thanks to all of these efforts, Nevada has been able to flatten the curve that projected an overload of hospital capacity and to prevent thousands more deaths than Nevada has seen to date.

With limited resources and a collective will, our state's health care system has ramped up and responded in extraordinary ways, but this crisis has accentuated many of our health care challenges that were also the reason for the creation of the Nevada Patient Protection Commission in 2019. While the current data indicates Nevada is making gradual progress in managing COVID-19, COVID-19 remains a serious health and economic threat. We know new cases and outbreaks will continue and our health care system must be prepared to respond.

I recognize this Commission still has tremendous work ahead to improve access and affordability for Nevada's patients, but at this time, I am asking that you also focus your collective experience and expertise on Nevada's ongoing response to COVID-19 to provide recommendations for policy makers, including myself and the 2021 Nevada Legislature. We need your recommendations on how Nevada can build, strengthen, and sustain the health care system and public health infrastructure our state needs in these unprecedented times. Such a focus may include:

- Ensuring access and affordability of health care for the vulnerable populations most impacted by COVID-19 and strengthening the state's safety net systems;
- Sustaining available health care options that have provided access and care for patients in the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to focusing on prevention by investing in primary care, telehealth, home and community based services, including allowing care

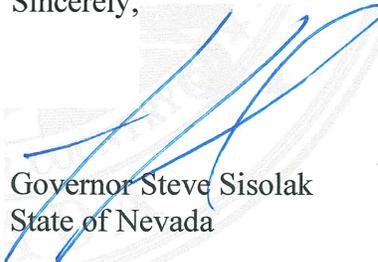
in alternative sites and settings, insurance coverage, and expanding federal support for states for Medicaid and related programs;

- Strengthening the efficiency of Nevada’s statutory public health and primary care structure, including through the local and regional framework, encouraging innovations through public/private partnerships, and investing in advances needed to ensure statewide coordination of health activities and resources;
- Enhancing Nevada’s ability to assess the health needs of its population, including viewing through a lens of health disparities and health equity, based on statewide data collection, including addressing challenges with real time death and demographic reporting and the need to improve access to data to establish common priorities and strategies; and
- Bolstering Nevada’s health workforce capacity and assurance of appropriate organized statewide efforts to develop and maintain essential personnel, educational, and environmental health services in urban and rural areas to provide access to necessary services.

As you continue your work to identify recommendations to improve our health care system, please keep in mind that state and local governments are experiencing significant revenue shortfalls. Federal funding is available to assist with the impact of COVID-19, but solutions utilizing these funds may not be sustainable for long-term solutions if state-funded fiscal support is required, so please focus your efforts on recommendations that could be implemented under these current circumstances.

Thank you for your service and consideration of this request, as well as your ongoing service to our State. I look forward to working together to build the health care system Nevadans deserve.

Sincerely,



Governor Steve Sisolak
State of Nevada