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February 8, 2019

John A. Yacenda, Ph.D., M.P.H., P.A.H.M., President
Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747

Dear President Yacenda,

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) has received your letter concerning testimony the Forum received about challenges in recruiting and retaining social workers for Elder Protective Services (EPS), shortage of social workers at state agencies in Nevada, limited geriatric training, and specialization opportunities. ADSD appreciates the Forum's input and support regarding these matters.

ADSD has identified through this year's budget process a major enhancement which will expand EPS to a full Adult Protective Services (APS) program. The State of Nevada is one of three states not providing this service. An APS program will provide much needed protective services to adults 18-59 with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities in addition to elders 60 years and older.

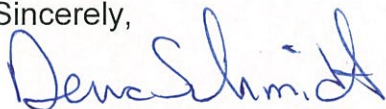
To prepare for this landmark and historic change, ADSD was awarded the Administration for Community Living, Enhance States Protective Services Grant. As a result, ADSD is consulting with the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) to fully transition EPS to a full APS program. Through the consultation process, national best practices in the field of protective services have been identified and NAPSA has developed a "blueprint" for the transition and formulation necessary to address organizational and policy change. These efforts will enable ADSD to identify barriers and develop steps to overcome them for all Nevadan's 18-59.

In an effort to improve social worker recruitment, retention and compensation ADSD has developed detailed program narratives regarding social worker's job duties and responsibilities and is working with Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to evaluate current social work classifications. This is vital as DHRM implements a Social Worker Reclassification Study as the complexities of these positions have grown over the years and will need to be reviewed and aligned to develop a sustainable APS model for Nevada.

ADSD recognizes the value and need to provide social workers training in the field of geriatrics. As such, ADSD contracts with the Nevada Geriatric Education Center to provide specialized geriatric training opportunities to ADSD staff. Four trainings per year are provided which offer continuing education credits for social worker. This year training opportunities include Ethical Issues and Case Studies, Compulsive Disorders and Hoarding, Elder Recovery in 2019: Gambling and Other Addictive Disorders, Elder Suicide and Depression: Talk Saves Lives. Additionally, ADSD has training funds for staff to attend national conferences to stay current on best practices in the field of protective services. Staff attends numerous conferences including: National Adult Protective Services (NAPSA) Conference, Aging in America, Seniors and Law Enforcement Together (SALT) Conference, Alzheimer's Association Conference, Texas Adult Protective Services Conference, and the Department of Justice, Rural and Tribal Justice Summit.

We appreciate the Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum's support in addressing these important topics relating to social workers and aging persons. Our social workers are essential to how Elder Protective Services and a future Adult Protective Services program will serve vulnerable adults in the State of Nevada. We are proactively meeting with all concerned parties and developing needed strategies to improve services through the current Social Worker Classification. It is the upmost desire of ADSD to recruit, retain, train and develop a workforce which will bring stability and provide needed supports to the most vulnerable and frail individuals seeking our assistance.

Sincerely,



Dena Schmidt, Administrator
Aging and Disability Services

cc: Richard Whitley, Director
Department of Health and Human Services