



NEVADA LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE
(*Nevada Revised Statutes 439B.200*)

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The twelfth meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Legislative Committee on Health Care was held on Thursday, February 22, 2007, at 5 p.m. in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" ([Exhibit A](#)) and other substantive exhibits, is available on the Nevada Legislature's Web site at www.leg.state.nv.us/73rd/Interim. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Maurice E. Washington, Chairman
Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, Vice Chairwoman
Senator Joseph J. Heck
Assemblyman Joe Hardy
Assemblywoman Kathy McClain

COMMITTEE MEMBER EXCUSED:

Senator Steven A. Horsford

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Marsheilah D. Lyons, Principal Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB
Amber J. Joiner, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB
Sara Partida, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, LCB
Erin DeLong, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division, LCB

OPENING REMARKS

Senator Maurice E. Washington, Chairman, welcomed the Committee members and public to the twelfth and final meeting of the Legislative Committee on Health Care. The additional meeting was called so that the members could receive a presentation and review the final draft report regarding the development of a statewide strategic health care plan for the State of Nevada from the contracting firm hired by the Committee during the 2005-2006 interim. Chairman Washington expressed his gratitude and appreciation on behalf of the Committee to the contractor and all of the stakeholders for their participation and assistance in developing the plan.

PRESENTATION REGARDING THE NEVADA STRATEGIC HEALTH PLAN

- Peter Burns, M.B.A., Health Policy Consultant, Burns and Associates, Inc., Phoenix, Arizona, gave his formal delivery of the final draft of the statewide strategic health care plan ([Exhibit B](#)). Mr. Burns said modifications can be made by the Committee as necessary to the final drafted plan. He noted that the essence of the plan is contained in the first section of the report which is identified as the “Executive Summary.”

Mr. Burns gave a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit C](#)) highlighting the process of the plan. He indicated that Assembly Bill 342 (Chapter 418, *Statutes of Nevada*) from the 2005 Legislative Session required the development of a statewide strategic health care plan according to the health care needs in the State of Nevada. Mr. Burns reviewed various statistics and discussed the following topics that initiated the planning process: (1) the State of Nevada’s health care environment; (2) the shortage of health care professionals in Nevada; (3) the State’s uninsured residents; (4) the rapid population growth in Nevada, particularly in the 65 and older age group; (5) the State’s low percentage of the population covered by Medicaid and its resulting impacts on the uninsured population, federal funding, health care risks, and delays in medical treatment; (6) the national indicators and Nevada’s status and ranking in health care; and (7) the State’s behavioral and mental health care issues.

Mr. Burns reviewed the planning process which involved the following meetings and groups: (1) the ten monthly interim meetings receiving public testimony and input held by the Legislative Committee on Health Care from October 2005 through July 2006; (2) the participation of over 100 individual stakeholders that collaborated in six focus groups, which met in February and March 2006; and (3) the stakeholders’ health care summit held in May 2006 at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He added that coordination with State health care agencies and monitoring of planning activities with the Nevada System of Higher Education and the Governor’s Commission on Medical Education, Research and Training also played roles in the process.

Mr. Burns continued his slide presentation by discussing the stakeholders' summit and its purpose, which was to evaluate the strategies that were derived from the six focus groups. He said recommendations were adopted that would be representative of a consensus toward developing Nevada's statewide strategic health care plan. Mr. Burns indicated that a total of seven recommendations, including 39 strategies, were consolidated into the final draft report covering the following seven areas: (1) health care professional education; (2) Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP); (3) small employer health insurance; (4) safety net options; (5) behavioral and mental health; (6) prevention and wellness programs; and (7) health care planning. He discussed each of the seven recommendations as well as the individual strategies proposed under each recommendation, which were developed from the stakeholders' summit.

Finally, Mr. Burns indicated that cost estimates were performed throughout the process. As a result, he said not all of the strategies are being recommended for immediate enactment. Mr. Burns noted that some of the recommendations are currently being processed through the following three channels: (1) the university system; (2) the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) budget process; and (3) the bill draft requests and expressions of support by the Legislative Committee on Health Care. The recommendations, strategies, and steps for moving the plan forward are itemized in Mr. Burns' slide presentation (see [Exhibit C](#)).

Mr. Burns concluded his presentation by commenting that the plan would probably change over time, but he stated that the report's findings are a sound foundation in order to move forward with a statewide strategic health care plan for the State of Nevada. He thanked the Committee for the opportunity to work with the members on developing the plan.

- Chairman Washington commented regarding the status of bill draft requests (BDRs) and the State agencies that are making budget appropriations concerning the health care plan's recommendations. He asked representatives present from the DHHS to provide updates to the Committee members concerning items being included in their budget, that have been recommended by the Governor, or that are being addressed in legislative BDRs for the Department.
- Michael J. Willden, Director, DHHS, referred to a handout he provided which he stated is a working draft accountability document ([Exhibit D](#)) concerning Nevada's health care plan. He said the report indicates what the DHHS is currently doing or plans to do if the budget is approved and pertaining legislative bills are passed. Mr. Willden pointed out that the document references the 39 strategies noted in the health care plan and also identifies their fiscal impacts for 2008 and 2009. He began reviewing the document by discussing the university system and additional funding for the graduate medical education (GME) program, which he said has been included as an item for special consideration in the Governor's *Executive Budget*. Mr. Willden commented that the GME is also an evolving issue on the national level.

- Charles Duarte, Administrator, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, DHHS, in response to a question raised by Chairman Washington, clarified that raising the Medicare cap was indicated in Mr. Burns' report, but the "zeroing out" of the federal GME funding mentioned by Mr. Willden was in reference to Medicaid.
- Mr. Willden continued with his presentation and discussed increasing enrollment in the Medicaid and Nevada Check Up programs and funding for the Nevada Covering Kids and Families initiative. He mentioned the impending discontinuation of current grant funding and outreach efforts being made to obtain other funding sources, as well as current legislation that is being introduced to expand those efforts. Mr. Willden indicated that incremental caseload increases are included for the Medicaid and Nevada Check Up programs in the Governor's *Executive Budget* and added that the Medicaid budget is built on historical caseload growth instead of an outreach effort.

There was discussion regarding a concern that federal funding may be reauthorized and withheld for the SCHIP program. It was indicated that there may be a loss of a large portion of the unobligated or unused SCHIP funds in the Health Insurance Flexibility and Accountability (HIFA) waiver allotment, reducing the ability to expand coverage.

- Mr. Willden resumed his presentation and discussed several of the recommendations and strategies in the DHHS "Draft Accountability Document" ([Exhibit D](#)). In conclusion, he proposed that the document can be used on an ongoing basis to update the Committee throughout the process as the budgets develop and items are approved.
- Chairman Washington asked the Committee staff to provide the members with insight concerning the legislative process and BDRs being proposed or that have already been introduced in regard to the health care plan's recommendations.
- Marsheilah D. Lyons, Principal Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB, reviewed a list of the current BDRs or proposed requests on the following topics:
 1. Doubling the State's nursing program;
 2. Consolidating certain health care boards to address counseling needs;
 3. Replacing county indigent funds with general funds for the Medicaid and SCHIP programs;
 4. Implementing the SSI and Medicaid 210 Option for presumptive eligibility;
 5. Providing TBI services, which was also included in the Governor's *Executive Budget*;
 6. Including support for federally qualified health centers and primary and specialty care discount access to health care programs, and developing a fund to support rural emergency medical services;
 7. Obtaining medical clearances;

8. Appropriating funds concerning issues regarding substance abuse;
 9. Appropriating funds for a State Dental Health Officer and various wellness and prevention programs; and
 10. Creating the Health Care Planning Office within the DHHS, implementing professional planning in the Nevada System of Higher Education, and providing funding for the Legislative Committee on Health Care in order to deal with issues concerning licensing processes and boards.
- Chairman Washington said staff will provide a list of the BDRs to the members, and he noted that copies will also be available in his legislative office for the stakeholders. He added that copies of the DHHS “Accountability Draft Document” will also be available. Mr. Willden indicated that the DHHS document will also be available on the Department’s Web site.
 - Assemblywoman Leslie remarked that the DHHS draft document is extremely helpful and provides a framework for the Committee to move forward and be held accountable for what is needed concerning the State’s health care. She said the report also provides a benchmark for progress by documenting Nevada’s current statistical indicators as a basis upon which improvements can be made. Assemblywoman Leslie expressed her disappointment that more of the issues addressed were not included in the budget, and she indicated that efforts will continue to be made during the course of the legislative session to include more of the items.
 - Chairman Washington noted a couple of other BDRs not previously mentioned; he said one is in regard to the constitution of medical boards, and the other involves reinstituting a legislative committee on youth, child, and family issues.
 - Ms. Lyons, previously identified, pointed out to the Committee that there will be some technical changes and updated figures provided by the DHHS staff for the report; however, she indicated that the changes will not be substantive.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mitchell D. Forman, D.O., F.A.C.R., F.A.C.O.I., founding Dean, Touro University Nevada, located in Henderson, commented regarding the strategic health care plan for the State. Dr. Forman remarked that in order for the plan to be successful, it needs to be a collaborative effort and should combine the strengths and efficiencies of the private sector with those of the public system. He noted that throughout the report there is a sense of collaboration, but nothing is specifically mentioned in the document itself.

Dr. Forman mentioned that the Touro University Nevada is part of a coalition exploring the GME issue in Nevada. He stated that the University has already established an additional GME program in collaboration with the Valley Hospital Medical Center and he pointed out that the university has the first dermatology program

ever created in the State. He also commented that Touro University has the largest number of medical students in Nevada, and being a private institution there is no cost to the State. He continued that there will be approximately 150 graduating medical students per year, and the first class of physician assistants will be graduating in a month. Concluding, Dr. Forman remarked that the Touro University Nevada is willing to work collaboratively with the University of Nevada School of Medicine, and he offered that his institution can also make positive contributions to the State.

- Chairman Washington indicated that during the current legislative session, representatives of the university system would be giving a presentation to the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education on March 7, 2007, and he invited Dr. Forman to participate. The Chairman agreed that there needs to be a public and private partnership concerning the strategic health care plan, even though it is not mentioned in the report.
- The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

SENATOR HECK MOVED TO ACCEPT THE FINAL DRAFT REPORT OF THE STATEWIDE STRATEGIC HEALTH CARE PLAN FOR THE STATE OF NEVADA SUBMITTED BY THE CONTRACTOR. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ASSEMBLYWOMAN LESLIE, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Duer
Erin DeLong
Senior Research Secretary

Marsheilah D. Lyons
Principal Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Maurice E. Washington, Chairman

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the “Meeting Notice and Agenda” provided by Marsheilah D. Lyons, Principal Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), Carson City, Nevada.

[Exhibit B](#) is a final draft report, dated January 2007, titled “Nevada Strategic Health Plan—Recommendations and Strategies by Stakeholders and Legislators to Meet Growing Challenges Facing America’s Most Dynamic State,” submitted by Peter Burns, M.B.A., Health Policy Consultant, Burns & Associates, Inc., Phoenix, Arizona.

[Exhibit C](#) is a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation dated January 2007, titled “Nevada Strategic Health Plan Recommendations and Strategies by Stakeholders and Legislators to Meet Growing Challenges Facing America’s Most Dynamic State,” given by Peter Burns, M.B.A., Health Policy Consultant, Burns & Associates, Inc., Phoenix.

[Exhibit D](#) is a draft accountability document, dated February 2007, titled “A State Health Plan For Nevada What NVDHHS Currently Does/or Plans to Do,” provided by Michael J. Willden, Director, Department of Health and Human Services, Carson City.

This set of “Summary Minutes and Action Report” is supplied as an informational service. Exhibits in electronic format may not be complete. Copies of the complete exhibits, other materials distributed at the meeting, and the audio record are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library online at www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm or telephone: 775/684-6827.