



P.O. Box 40674  
Reno, NV 89504-4674

Phone: (775) 787-9411  
FAX: (775) 787-9445  
www.lighthouseofthesierra.com

Providing comprehensive,  
coordinated services related to  
the treatment and recovery of  
chemically dependent women  
and their families, resulting in  
sustainable self-sufficiency.

#### Officers

President  
Bill Bertelson  
Vice President  
Klaus Grimm  
Treasurer  
Tom Wood  
Secretary  
Clara Andriola  
Past President  
Gina McCreary

#### Board of Directors

Jon Bengtson  
Chris Benna  
Michelle Casey  
Rebecca Dickson  
Miranda Du  
Karen Goodwill-Freda  
Stacie Griffin  
Klaus Grimm  
Carle Huff  
Stephanie Lepori  
Cindy Potter  
Scott Shackleton  
Tom Wood

#### Advisory Board

Ken Adams  
Deborah Agosti  
Glenda Allen  
Bob Anderson  
Peggy Bixby  
Megan Bowen  
Margaret Cavin  
Mark Combs  
Mendy Elliott  
Jeff Griffin  
Scott Jordan  
Julia Kroner  
Trudy Larson  
Sheila Leslie  
L.D. Lovett  
Cary Lurie  
Mary Ellen McMullen  
Jean Myles  
Robert Myles  
Karen Reuter  
Sherry Sibayan  
Mary Simmons  
Lynne K. Simons  
Peter Stremmel  
Sue Wagner

Chief Executive Officer  
Tom Bolan

Chief Operating Officer  
Diane Thorkildson

November 4, 2003

To: Senator Townsend and Members of the Nevada Mental Health Plan Implementation Commission

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Tom Bolan and I am the Chief Executive Officer of STEP 2 in Reno and serve as the Secretary/Treasurer of the statewide alcohol and drug provider association, Nevada AADAPTS (Nevada Alliance for Addictive Disorders- Advocacy, Prevention and Treatment Services).

As previously brought to your attention and demonstrated by the survey conducted by BADA, Nevada's private, non-profit substance abuse treatment providers have been serving persons with co-occurring disorder for decades.

Parity for mental health services is specifically discussed by the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health report, Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America, Recommendation 1.2, which states, "address mental health with the same urgency as physical health."

In that spirit, we urge you to consider substance abuse treatment as an important element in a complex continuum of health care services. As you hear in testimony today, co-occurring disorders are most effectively addressed if consumers have access to up-to-date, evidence based assessment and treatment and modalities. In that vein, substance abuse treatment must be considered and specifically addressed when looking to strengthen the delivery of mental health care by striving for health care parity.

As stated in the Commission's recommendation, "flexible, accountable financing that pays for treatments and services that work and result in recovery is an essential aspect of transforming mental health care (including substance abuse treatment) in America."

EXHIBIT <u>5</u>	MentalHealth	Document consists of <u>2</u> pages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entire document provided.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Due to size limitations, pages ____ through ____ provided.		
A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775-684-6827 or e-mail library@icb.state.nv.us).		
Meeting Date <u>11-04-03</u>		

Chemical dependency treatment is funded through a complex web of public funding, co-pay and private insurance. It is a system that is in need of examination and improvement.

Simply put, we recommend that substance abuse treatment continue to be included in discussions and planning to address parity in funding and access to Nevada's health care system. As reported earlier in the staff report "Mental Health Parity", a majority of states have laws requiring some form of coverage for chemical dependency disorders. In fact, eight states have laws requiring full parity for chemical dependency benefits with other surgical and medical benefits (Connecticut, Delaware, Minnesota, North Carolina, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia).

We urge the committee to recommend the Legislature draft a bill similar to S.B. 557 to include parity for chemical dependency treatment with the goal of enhancing access and affordability of treatment for all Nevadans who seek it.

Let no Nevadan seeking to address the disease of addiction be turned away because of inability to pay, inadequate health coverage or unavailable appropriate treatment slots.



Thomas F. Bolan

Chief Executive Officer