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Dear Interim Finance Committee,

Nevada's children face a mental health crisis like never before.

Over 34,000 Nevada youth suffered from at least one major depressive episode in 2020. An estimated 22,000 did not receive treatment. Over 8,000 Nevada youth lack coverage for mental health even if they are insured.\* Due to the lack of mental health providers, especially in rural areas, these numbers are undoubtedly higher.

Untreated mental health issues can force children down any number of roads that lead to poor outcomes. Some may only need to be placed on IEPs in school (including 1,931 in 2020 alone), but many turn to some form of substance abuse (12,000 children in 2020) to cope. Regardless of the severity, once a child has a problem, the costs to address it in schools, at home or in the juvenile justice system, multiply.

Nevada is ranked 51st in the nation for the prevalence of mental illness and lower rates of access to care.

Together, we can change that.

On **Wednesday, August 17th at 9 am**, the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) will meet to determine several of the Governor's proposals to invest ARP funds into Nevada, including critically-needed funding for one of our most vulnerable populations - our children. Over \$50 million dollars for children's mental health services and investing in infrastructure to support our children at school, home, and in needed medical facilities.

#### Key areas of this proposal include:

- Almost \$15 million allocated for children's wraparound care coordination and intensive case management to support the highest acuity youth and families. This funding will provide services to 1,000 families over a two-year period.
- \$4,000,000 has been allocated to provide supplemental funding for school based mental health providers. This includes school social workers and mental health professionals that were temporarily staffed in our schools during the pandemic. Continuing these services at this time is critical for our youth.

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- Almost \$5 million has been allocated for robust in-home treatment options, which will allow children and youth to safely remain in the home while being provided intensive therapeutic and behavioral support services. Supportive living with the goal of partnering with the family to keep the youth at high risk for displacement in the home reduces family and youth trauma, improves outcomes, decreases relinquishment, and ultimately decreases the cost to the system.
- A proposal for \$3.4 million will allow The Division of Child and Family Services Mobile Crisis Response Teams (MCRT) to provide deployment to youth and families in need of urgent mental health care, assessment, and stabilization in the Clark County School District, Washoe County School District, and the Nevada Department of Education during after-school hours.
- Almost \$2.9 million has been proposed to support emergency and planned respite services for qualifying families.
- In addition to the support that respite provides, Family to Family Peer Support provides instrumental, social, and informational support to families with children with behavioral health and special education needs. With this proposal for \$1.9 million, about 1,500 children will be served over a two-year period.
- The Clark County Clinical Division and China Spring Youth Camp in Douglas County are both working to support multi-system-involved youth with substance use and mental health issues. About \$4.8 million has been allocated for this work.
- Youth in crisis are currently being held in inappropriate settings due to a lack of appropriate beds at Nevada facilities. A proposal for \$6.7 million will allow the Division of Child and Family Services to implement tenancy improvements and adequate staffing at Desert Willow Treatment Center and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility Oasis.

Don't let our children face this crisis alone. We implore you to approve these items to help improve mental health conditions for our children in our great state.



The Board of Directors  
Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada

\*Source: <https://mhanational.org/issues/2020/mental-health-america-youth-data>