

STATE OF NEVADA
LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU

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LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89101
(702) 486-2800

January 11, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Ben Kieckhefer
Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
101 North Carson Street, Suite 1
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4786

Dear Mr. Kieckhefer:

At its work session on [August 16, 2022](#), the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs (*Nevada Revised Statutes* 218E.750) approved and voted to send a letter expressing the Committee's support of the [Nevada Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness to Housing](#) (IACHH), emphasizing the increasing need for greater coordination of state agencies and consolidated efforts to address the growing need for safe and healthy housing and wraparound services for Nevada's senior citizens, veterans, and adults with special needs.

During a presentation from representatives with the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Committee members learned that Nevada saw a significant increase in rates of homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic and our state has the ninth highest rate of homelessness nationwide. Since 2020, older adults are particularly overrepresented among those experiencing chronic homelessness. Veterans aged 55 or older account for more than half of veterans dependent on temporary shelters. Individuals subjected to homelessness are also at greater risk for experiencing mental illness and being exposed to significant health hazards and communicable diseases often acquired from living on the streets.

Research studies from around the country consistently demonstrate that having access to safe, affordable housing provides a foundation upon which individuals can build a better future for themselves. Some of the benefits of working to resolve homelessness are that individuals can:

- Rise out of poverty
- Improve their physical and mental health
- Reconnect with family and friends if they have become estranged
- Engage in work, formal education or training, and community participation
- Break the cycle of intergenerational poverty

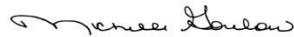
The efforts of the IACHH improve individual lives, which have a ripple effect to the rest of our communities. With your leadership, we have an opportunity to provide a holistic approach to solving homelessness in Nevada. A strategic investment in addressing crisis situations will reduce

Mr. Kieckhefer
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January 11, 2023

high-cost tertiary level incidents such as emergency room visits. In addition, an investment in an adequate supply of safe, appropriate, and affordable housing can have a positive economic impact on our health, justice, and welfare budgets. This objective requires a range of resources and responses to sufficiently meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue and the needs of our seniors, veterans, and adults with disabilities, and for your dedication to all Nevadans. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Michelle.Gorelow@asm.state.nv.us or reach out to Ashlee Kalina, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, ashlee.kalina@lcb.state.nv.us

Sincerely,



Michelle Gorelow, Chair
Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

cc: The Honorable Joe Lombardo, Governor, Office of the Governor
Richard Whitley, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Lisa Sherych, Administrator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health

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January 11, 2023

The Honorable Joe Lombardo
Governor of Nevada
101 North Carson Street, Suite 1
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4786

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Governor Lombardo

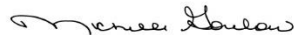
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Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

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Lisa Sherych, Administrator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health

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January 12, 2023

Lisa Sherych
Administrator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health
400 West King Street, Suite 300
Carson City, Nevada 89703

Dear Ms. Sherych:

At its work session on [August 16, 2022](#), the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs (*Nevada Revised Statutes* 218E.750) approved and voted to send a letter expressing the Committee's support of the [Nevada Interagency Advisory Council on Homelessness to Housing](#) (IACHH), emphasizing the increasing need for greater coordination of state agencies and consolidated efforts to address the growing need for safe and healthy housing and wraparound services for Nevada's senior citizens, veterans, and adults with special needs.

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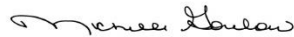
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Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
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January 12, 2023

Richard Whitley
Director, Department of Health and Human Services
400 West King Street, Suite 300
Carson City, Nevada 89703

Dear Director Whitley:

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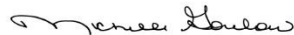
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Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
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January 11, 2023

Jeff Briske
Director, Office of Educator Development, Licensure and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)
700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Mr. Briske:

At its work session on [August 16, 2022](#), the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs (*Nevada Revised Statutes* 218E.750) voted to send a letter to Nevada's Department of Education (NDE) expressing the Committee's desire for NDE to work with the [Heroes to Education Program](#) to assist service members, veterans, and military spouses with transitioning into careers in public education.

During a presentation from Dr. George Ann Rice with the Heroes to Education Program, the Committee learned about the Program and the success it is having in other jurisdictions around the United States. The Program is intended to be a public-private partnership to help fill K-12 positions including education support staff, security, and resource specialists. Its primary goals are to work toward reducing veteran unemployment levels and fill shortages in the education sector with a highly motivated workforce. Through the Heroes to Education Program, veterans would also receive training to obtain certification and licensing to enter the education field as quickly as possible.

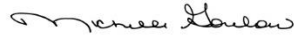
As part of this letter of support, the Committee also encourages the creation of a state coordinator position to oversee and manage the administration of the Program and two facilitators or recruiter within the NDE to collaborate with nonprofit organizations and local, state, and federal agencies to better connect military personnel, veterans, and their spouses to available K-12 employment opportunities throughout Nevada. This approach also has the potential to leverage both public and private sector resources in order to bolster the efficiency of government support. The public resources would support the staffing infrastructure of the program and private resources would support the progress for military personnel and veterans. Additionally, it holds the promise of maximizing government resources through coordinated partnerships with other government agencies like the Nevada Department of Veterans Services.

Veterans are a natural fit to lead classrooms and support NDE's objectives of providing high caliber instruction to Nevada's students. With their real-world experience and leadership skills, veterans are able to set the best examples for students. Further, veterans possess employable skills such as performance efficiency and a rapid learning curve. For these reasons and more, we should encourage our veterans and their spouses to pursue careers in education. Thank you for your time

Mr. Briske
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Sincerely,



Michelle Gorelow, Chair
Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

cc: Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education
Craig Statucki, Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement,
Nevada Department of Education
George Ann Rice, PhD, Heroes to Education Program

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January 11, 2023

Jhone M. Ebert
Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education
700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

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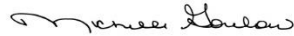
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January 12, 2023

VIA EMAIL

George Ann Rice, Ph.D.
Heroes to Education Program
riceg1@live.com

Dear Dr. Rice:

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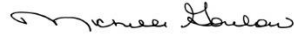
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Craig Statucki
Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement
Nevada Department of Education
700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

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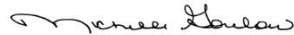
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Suzanne Bierman, J.D., M.P.H.
Administrator, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy
1100 East William Street, Suite 101
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Ms. Bierman:

At its work session on [August 16, 2022](#), the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs (*Nevada Revised Statutes* 218E.750) voted and approved to send a letter to the Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHCFP) encouraging the Division to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow Nevada Medicaid to finance the [Project ECHO](#) applications for telehealth providers in Nevada.

During a presentation from the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center with the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, Committee members briefly learned about Project ECHO, a model for telehealth and specialty health care services that has shown promise in at least four other states in bolstering Medicaid program efforts to improve care in underserved areas, particularly for senior citizens, veterans, and adults with disabilities. The program connects expert specialist teams at an academic medical research center with primary care providers in local communities. As the primary health care payer for low-income Nevadans, Medicaid is particularly well-positioned to benefit from collaboration with Project ECHO.

Project ECHO increases the likelihood that patients get the care they need when they need it without having to rely on referrals or travel long distances. The capacity of Project ECHO facilitates a more effective use of existing health care resources and can support Nevada's efforts to achieve better health outcomes and reduce costs in Medicaid.

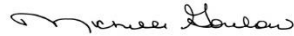
Other states—[California](#), [Colorado](#), [New Mexico](#), and [Oregon](#)—have enabled Medicaid financing for Project ECHO applications that have demonstrated significant progress in bridging health gaps for vulnerable populations, especially in rural communities. The financing strategies previously approved by CMS have propelled opportunities for states to evolve financing of Project ECHO toward an outcomes-focused payment system.

As we witnessed with the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerable populations—namely seniors, individuals with disabilities, and veterans—were facing greater disadvantage as a result of isolation and quarantines. Not only does Project ECHO show significant promise for resolving some of these limitations of time and distance, but it can also offer much needed relief for a health

Ms. Bierman
Page 2
January 11, 2023

care workforce that is already stretched so thin in our state. Thank you for your time and consideration of this timely issue. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Michelle.Gorelow@asm.state.nv.us or Ashlee Kalina, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, ashlee.kalina@lcb.state.nv.us.

Sincerely,



Michelle Gorelow, Chair
Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

cc: Richard Whitley, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Lisa Sherych, Administrator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, DHHS
Dena Schmidt, Administrator, Aging and Disability Services Division, DHHS
John Packham, Ph.D., Co-Director, Nevada Health Workforce Research Center, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine

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January 12, 2023

John Packham, Ph.D.
Co-Director, Nevada Health Workforce Research Center
University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine
604 Moana Lane
Reno, Nevada 89509

Dear Dr. Packham:

At its work session on [August 16, 2022](#), the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs (*Nevada Revised Statutes* 218E.750) voted and approved to send a letter to the Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHCFP) encouraging the Division to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow Nevada Medicaid to finance the [Project ECHO](#) applications for telehealth providers in Nevada.

During a presentation from the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center with the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, Committee members briefly learned about Project ECHO, a model for telehealth and specialty health care services that has shown promise in at least four other states in bolstering Medicaid program efforts to improve care in underserved areas, particularly for senior citizens, veterans, and adults with disabilities. The program connects expert specialist teams at an academic medical research center with primary care providers in local communities. As the primary health care payer for low-income Nevadans, Medicaid is particularly well-positioned to benefit from collaboration with Project ECHO.

Project ECHO increases the likelihood that patients get the care they need when they need it without having to rely on referrals or travel long distances. The capacity of Project ECHO facilitates a more effective use of existing health care resources and can support Nevada's efforts to achieve better health outcomes and reduce costs in Medicaid.

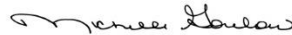
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Dr. Packham
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Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

cc: Richard Whitley, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Suzanne Bierman, J.D., M.P.H., Administrator, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, DHHS
Lisa Sherych, Administrator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health, DHHS
Dena Schmidt, Administrator, Aging and Disability Services Division, DHHS

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January 12, 2023

Dena Schmidt
Administrator, Aging and Disability Services Division
3208 Goni Road, Building I, Suite 181
Carson City, Nevada 89706-7931

Dear Ms. Schmidt:

At its work session on [August 16, 2022](#), the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With Special Needs (*Nevada Revised Statutes* 218E.750) voted and approved to send a letter to the Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHCFP) encouraging the Division to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to allow Nevada Medicaid to finance the [Project ECHO](#) applications for telehealth providers in Nevada.

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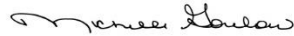
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Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

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January 12, 2023

Lisa Sherych
Administrator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health
4150 Technology Way
Carson City, Nevada 89706

Dear Ms. Sherych:

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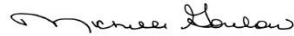
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Michelle Gorelow, Chair
Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens,
Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

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Dena Schmitt, Administrator, Aging and Disability Service Division, DHHS
John Packham, Ph.D., Co-Director, Nevada Health Workforce Research Center, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine

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January 12, 2023

Richard Whitley
Director, Department of Health and Human Services
400 West King Street, Suite 300
Carson City, Nevada 89703

Dear Director Whitley:

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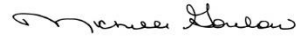
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