

STATE OF NEVADA
NEVADA SILVER HAired LEGISLATIVE FORUM

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
401 S. CARSON STREET
CARSON CITY, NEVADA 89701-4747

Tel. No.: (775) 684-6825
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FRAN ALMARAZ, *President*
MARILYN E. JORDAN, ED.D., *Vice President*
LUCILLE ADIN, *Northern Facilitator*
ROSIE TYLER, *Southern Facilitator*

November 7, 2024

Keri D. Nikolajewski
Chief of Staff
Nevada System of Higher Education
4300 South Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119-7530

Dear Ms. Nikolajewski:

The [Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum](#) was created by the Legislature under *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) [427A.313 through 427A.400](#) to identify and act upon issues of importance to aging persons. During the 2023-2024 Legislative Interim, Forum members heard testimony that at least 80 percent of adults 65 years of age or older have at least one chronic health condition, and 68 percent of those have two or more chronic conditions. The cumulative impact of chronic health challenges often leads to compromised independence with activities of daily living, such as bathing, eating, and mobility.

One of the policy recommendations made during presentations to the Forum was a proposal for increased support for seniors to receive quality, geriatrics-focused health care. Nevada is known as a “neurology desert,” which complicates opportunities for seniors to obtain cognitive decline assessments and accurate diagnoses. Additionally, Nevada has a very low number of certified geriatricians—only 57, which is one physician specializing in elder health care for every 11,983 people 60 years of age or older.

At its final meeting and work session on [August 7, 2024](#), Forum members voted to send this letter expressing the Forum’s support for including courses in basic geriatric care for all health care training programs in Nevada. As our state’s population continues to age, it is imperative that we equip our health care workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective and compassionate care to older adults.

Research shows that health care professionals trained in geriatrics are better prepared to manage the complexities of aging, leading to improved patient outcomes and higher quality of care. A basic knowledge of geriatric care has also shown to enhance preventative care strategies, help reduce hospitalizations, and provide more personalized and respectful care for this diverse and often vulnerable population. Additionally, such training fosters improved communication and

Ms. Nikolajewski
Page 2
November 7, 2024

understanding with patients and their families, enhances interdisciplinary collaboration, and promotes ethical decision-making in challenging situations.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue for Nevada's seniors. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at NVSilverForum@lcb.state.nv.us or Ashlee Kalina, Forum Coordinator, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, at ashlee.kalina@lcb.state.nv.us.

Sincerely,

Fran Almaraz
Forum President
Nevada Silver Haired Legislative Forum

FA/jj:G242231-3
cc: Chief of Staff, Nevada System of Higher Education
Sanford Center for Aging, University of Nevada, Reno, School of Medicine

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Peter Reed, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Director, Sanford Center for Aging
University of Nevada, Reno, School of Medicine
1664 North Virginia Street
University of Nevada, Reno/0146
Reno, Nevada 89557-0146

Dear Director Reed:

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