

Primary Care Office (PCO)

Our Mission

The PCO is an administrative unit of the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health that works to improve the health care infrastructure of Nevada. The PCO supports the Division's mission to promote the health of Nevadans by working to:

- Improve access to primary health care services for Nevada's underserved;
- Increase availability of primary care providers in underserved areas;
- Increase access to maternal and child health care service for underserved populations; and
- Improve provider access to health care financing resources.

Programs and Services

The PCO is funded by federal grants from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) to support multiple programs through the following services:

- Complete applications for federal designation of Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) or Medically Underserved Areas of Populations (MUA/Ps). These designations support eligibility for increased federal funding and recruitment of health care professionals;
- Review applications and provide letters of support for the J-1 Physician Visa Waiver program to bring international medical graduates to underserved areas in Nevada; and
- Review site applications and provide recommendations for the National Health Service Corps loan repayment and scholar programs.

The PCO also engages in the following activities:

- Support primary care workforce development through linkages with education and training, licensure and certification, and recruitment and retention.
- Review applications for certificates of need for construction, or expansion, of facilities providing medical care in counties with less than 100,000 population, or communities with less than 25,000 population in counties with more than 100,000 population.

Oversight

The Primary Care Advisory Council was established in 2008 to enhance oversight of the PCO and the services provided, in an advisory capacity to the Administrator of the Division of Public and Behavioral Health. Creation of the PCAC led to statutory and regulatory changes to ensure compliance with the J-1 Physician Visa Waiver program, under NRS 439A.130-185 and NAC 439A.700-755.

Linkages

The PCO works with many public and private partners to support the health care safety net, including: Nevada Primary Care Association, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Centers, Critical Access Hospitals, National Health Service Corps sites, State Office of Rural Health, Nevada Rural Hospital Association, University of Nevada School of Medicine, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Nevada Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, and multiple health professional licensing boards. Facilitated activities include strategic planning for shortage designations, primary care data development and sharing, recruitment and retention strategies, and workforce development.

Contact

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PCO Highlights from July - September 2021

- National Health Service Corps (NHSC) outreach activities during this quarter included site certifications for several addiction/behavioral health centers: New Frontier Treatment Center-Fallon; Ridge House, Inc-Reno; The Life Change Center-Sparks and Carson City; Bridge Counseling Associates, Inc-Las Vegas and a Primary Care (PC)/Specialty/OBGYN/Pediatric site - Volunteers in Medicine (VMSN) of So. NV. Planned Parenthood Mar Monte-Fifth St. Health Center was provided technical assistance as they are currently only providing reproductive services and would need to provide women's comprehensive PC services. The following sites are pending approval contingent on the designations that have been proposed for withdrawal re-designated. The recertification cycle closed October 19, 2021. These activities increase awareness of the program and subsequent program participation, which leads to increased recruitment and retention of health providers for underserved maternal, pediatric, and adolescent populations. These safety net health care sites serve all patients regardless of ability to pay and represent critical primary care, mental health, and dental access points for maternal, pediatric, and adolescent populations in Nevada.
- Zero Conrad 30 J-1 Visa Waiver applications were reviewed, public hearings were held, and letters of support completed for physicians to practice in Nevada under the Conrad 30 J-1 Visa Waiver program. These doctors serve underserved populations including maternal, pediatric, and adolescent populations in Las Vegas and Reno area. The J-1 program has received fourteen applications this program year.
- PCO Newsletter (<https://conta.cc/3ze5SeA>) was published to 479 subscribers and included multiple articles that support maternal, child, and adolescent health. Articles included information regarding sNational Shortage Designation Update (NSDU) project; National Health Service Corps (NHSC) recertification cycle open August 10 – September 28; Suicide Prevention Trainings sponsored by Division of Public and Behavioral Health Office of Suicide Prevention; CASAT Learning-Skills for Psychological Recovery; Maternal and Child Health Title V Federally available data dashboard, Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); US DHHS NOFO in American Rescue Plan funding to reduce burnout and promote mental health among health and public safety workforce and Graduate Medical Education Program to support the training of residents in primary care residency training programs. Additionally an announcement was sent out regarding the Maternal and Child Health Title V Public Input Survey (<https://conta.cc/3yPYRjt> successfully delivered to 456 subscribers, 61 views, and 7 clicks/shares)
- Monthly or Quarterly meetings continue with our safety net partners continued collaboration on data development and sharing, provider recruitment and retention, shortage designations, statewide rational service area plans, and workforce development. PCO is working with key stakeholders to create a Statewide Rational Service Area Plan using identified priorities of Mental Health, Seniors, and Children and submitted for review to HRSA March 30, 2021, and now approved. The Recruitment and Retention stakeholder would like to work toward data that can show why clinicians either do not come to Nevada or why they leave, next meeting we are looking at bringing in recruitment specialists from the larger health care organizations to let us know how we might support them in those efforts and find out what they feel is needed.
- Maternal Child Adolescent Health (MCAH) program specific:
 - Shared Federal Registrar notice that HRSA seeks public and stakeholder feedback on the proposed Maternity Care Target Area (MCTAs) criteria through November 26, 2021.

If you would like to receive our PCO Quarterly Newsletter, you can sign up online through http://dphh.nv.gov/Programs/Conrad30/NV_PCO_Newsletter_Sign_Up/ OR [constant contact](#).