

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 January – March 2021

- National Health Service Corps (NHSC) outreach activities during this quarter included one health clinic virtual site visit with Pediatric Small Smiles Dental, one virtual student outreach event with the University of Las Vegas for their Interprofessional Education Workshop with approximately 300 students via recorded YouTube presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pc-XhjFSLhU>. Zero site certifications or recertifications reviews were completed (the new site certification cycle is open through May 25, 2021). Inquiries received from Children’s Cabinet, and a provider interested in opening a Pediatric RHC in Pahrump, and Boulder City Hospital and RHC seeking to become NHSC certified. 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.
- Nine Conrad 30 J-1 Visa Waiver applications were reviewed, public hearings were held, and letters of support completed for nine physicians to practice in Nevada under the Conrad 30 J-1 Visa Waiver program. One of the physicians specializes in OBGYN and will serve underserved populations in Clark county at Women’s Health Associates of So. NV, and one physician is a pediatric cardiac intensivist in Clark county, and one Rheumatologist who will work at a FQHC who serves the underserved populations in Clark County. These doctors will 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.
- The 1st Quarter (01/11/21) PCO Newsletter was published to 467 subscribers and included multiple articles that support maternal, child, and adolescent health. Articles included information regarding shortage designation updates, Nevada 211 Youth App, Youth Mental Health Supports and virtual training for parents and providers, Health Status of Children Entering Kindergarten in Nevada survey results of the 2019-20 year, and P4 Challenge – Innovations in Pediatric Primary Care to Improve Child Health. Announcement for Nurse Corp loan repayment cycle open (01/12/21) that sets aside special funding for applicants who specialize in women’s and behavioral health; up to \$5 million allocated for applicants working as women’s health nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, or certified nurse midwives, or certified RNs in obstetrics and gynecology.
- Monthly or Quarterly meetings continue with our safety net partners continue to collaborate on data development and sharing, provider recruitment and retention, shortage designations, statewide rational service area plans, and workforce development. PCO Primary Care Needs Assessment completed with stakeholder input with identified priorities of Mental Health, Seniors, and Children and submitted for review to HRSA March 30, 2021.

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