



Joe Lombardo
Governor

Julia Ratti
Chair

Washoe Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board

March 1, 2023

Assemblywoman Shea Backus
Chair, Assembly Committee on Revenue
Committee Members

Dear Chair Backus and Members of the Committee:

The Washoe Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board would like to express its support for Assembly Bill 37 (AB37), developed by the Rural Region Behavioral Health Policy Board which addresses the behavioral health workforce crisis currently being experienced in Nevada.

Nearly all of Nevada is considered a health care provider shortage area, with even more critical needs for more behavioral health providers across the State, as has been the case for many years (University of Nevada, Reno, School of Medicine, Office of Statewide Initiatives, 2023). While there are ideas to fill immediate gaps in service provision, ultimately, a long-term solution to improve the number of high-quality behavioral health providers licensed in Nevada is necessary to meet the ever-growing need.

Assembly Bill 37 authorizes the establishment of the Behavioral Health Workforce Development Center of Nevada, which will work with the K-12 system to support diverse efforts encouraging behavioral health careers; provide support and assistance to students within the Nevada higher education system; work to streamline behavioral health licensing processes; and work to ensure behavioral health practices can exist statewide, providing much needed services to both urban and rural areas.

This piece of legislation supports concepts that the Washoe Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board has identified as issues of concern and focus. We believe AB37 is an important and continuing step towards addressing behavioral health issues related to workforce in the State of Nevada and support its passage.

Thank you for your continuing support and representation of Nevadans everywhere!

Julia Ratti, Director of Programs and Projects,
Washoe County Health District
Chair, Washoe Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board

Steve Shell, Vice President of Behavioral Health
Renown Health
Vice-Chair, Washoe Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board