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Press Release - Announcing Health Impact Project grant to study health impacts of Nevada legislation affecting full-day kindergarten

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNLV AND PARTNERS TO STUDY HEALTH EFFECTS OF FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN, WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERED IN UPCOMING SESSION

Legislative modifications to full-day kindergarten could impact Nevada children's health

Las Vegas—Today, UNLV's School of Community Health Sciences announced a new collaborative project to inform decision makers about the health impacts of anticipated legislative proposals to expand full-day kindergarten in Nevada. Evidence shows that quality early education programs not only improve educational outcomes, but can also improve long-term health outcomes and reduce cases of stroke, diabetes, hypertension, and asthma.

As the Nevada Legislature convenes in February 2015, UNLV's School of Community Health Sciences, the Southern Nevada Health District, the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, the Children's Advocacy Alliance, Honoring Our Public Education (HOPE), educators in Clark County, the Las Vegas Healthy Communities Coalition, the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law, and other community partners around the state will conduct a health impact assessment or HIA of full-day kindergarten legislation.

Dean Shawn Gerstenberger of the School of Community Health Sciences said, "Education policy can also impact health. Through this project, we can highlight how full day kindergarten decisions may affect the future health of Nevadans."

An HIA is a promising tool that can be used to anticipate health impacts of real-time decisions. HIAs help identify and address the likely health benefits and risks of a decision made in a field outside the health sector, in this case education. HIAs use a flexible approach that brings together public health expertise, scientific data, and input from community and other stakeholders to examine the potential health risks and benefits of key policy proposals. Based on the potential effects identified, HIAs provide practical recommendations to capitalize on opportunities to improve community health and to minimize any potential health risks.

This HIA was made possible by a grant of more than \$89,000 from the Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts dedicated to promoting the use of health impact assessments in the United States. More information and a searchable map of HIA activity in the United States are available at www.healthimpactproject.org.

The UNLV School of Community Health Sciences is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of people worldwide. For more information, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/publichealth>.

The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Health Impact Project, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation or The Pew Charitable Trusts.

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