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Read more at: <http://guinncenter.org/publications/policy-reports/#SustainingNevada>

Guinn Center Provides Recommendations to Address Nevada's Mental Health Workforce Shortage

LAS VEGAS, NV—Nevada faces a critical shortage of mental health professionals. To focus on issues that can be addressed during the 2015 Legislative Session, the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities has released *Nevada's Mental Health Workforce: Shortages and Opportunities*.

"Improving mental health services has become a top priority for Nevada's Governor and Legislature," said Victoria Carreón, Director of Research and Policy at the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities. "Building Nevada's mental health workforce has emerged as a critical component of this effort." Recommendations to reduce licensing barriers for mental health professionals coming from other states include:

- Simplify licensing exam requirements by requiring only national exams and not State-specific tests.
- Eliminate years of experience requirements and accept training requirements from other states.
- Create uniform procedures for administering fingerprinting and allow provisional or full licenses to be granted before receipt of fingerprint results.
- Provide temporary or provisional licenses to professionals in good standing in other states until they meet all Nevada requirements.
- Create uniform 30-day timelines to consider applications.
- Consider joining interstate compacts in medicine, nursing, and psychology to improve recruitment from other states and facilitate telehealth services.

To improve competitiveness of State mental health employee salaries, the Guinn Center recommends increasing State salaries, benefits and incentives for mental health professionals and reducing reliance on contract workers. To create a sustainable mental health workforce over the long-term, the State should direct the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation to create a plan with an emphasis on engagement, training, recruitment, and retention.

The Guinn Center will be presenting its recommendations during a panel on health care provider shortages at the UNLV and UNSOM Interprofessional Health Equity Symposium on October 10, 2014. More information: <http://www.law.unlv.edu/HealthEquitySymposium2014>.

The Guinn Center for Policy Priorities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, bipartisan, policy center focused on providing independent and data-driven analysis of critical policy issues facing Nevada and the Intermountain West. The Guinn Center engages policy-makers, experts, and the public with innovative, fact-based research and analysis to advance policy solutions and inform debate.

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