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STATE OF NEVADA

Commission Members

Dr. KRISTOPHER SANCHEZ
Director



Wyett Gabriela, *Chair*
Ware Demetrius, *Vice Chair*
Steele Nic, *Member*
Romero Juanny, *Member*
Le Kim, *Member*
Jimenez-Wenz Julio, *Member*
Gina Jackson, *Member*
Gallagher Nina, *Member*

MARCEL SCHAEERER
Deputy Director

PERRY FAIGIN
Deputy Director

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY NEVADA COMMISSION ON MINORITY AFFAIRS

“The central advisory body advocating and providing a voice for Nevada’s minority community.”

MEETING MINUTES

Agency: Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs

Date: May 20, 2025

Time: 9:30 am

Location: Hybrid meeting – 3300 W. Sahara Ave., Suite 430, Tahoe Room, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102 & Webex (Remote technology system)

MEETING AGENDA

1. OPENING

A. Call to order & Roll call

The meetings call to order at 9:36 am by Chair Gabriela Wyett

Commission Members in Attendance: Gabriela Wyett, Demetrius Ware, Gina Jackson, Nina Gallagher, Juanny Romero, Nic Steele, Kim Lee

Commission Members Absent: Julio Jimenez-Wenz

Department Leadership & Staff in Attendance:

Marcel Schaeerer, Deputy Director, Department of Business and Industry
Michael Detmer, Chief Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General’s Office
Angie Rojas, Management Analyst, Department of Business and Industry

Members of the Public Present:

Julio Landero, Ganesh Kadam,

B. Silent Meditation & Pledge of Allegiance

30 seconds of silent meditation observed

C. Land Acknowledgements

Commissioner Jackson provided land acknowledgements honoring Nevada’s native citizens and their land.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (1st Period)

None

3. COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. Approval of March 13, 2025

Commissioner Steele moved to approve, Commissioner Ware seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Guest speaker presentation regarding mental health for Mental Health Awareness Month

Nicole representing Vegas Stronger shared insights into their organization's behavioral health services, recent partnerships, and community outreach efforts. Vegas Stronger is a primary behavioral health facility serving individuals aged 18 and older, with recent expansions to serve youth through acquisitions.

Below is a summary of the information provided during the presentation:

1. New Partnership and Services:

- Partnership with ABC Therapy: A recent merger focused on serving Spanish-speaking and undocumented populations, particularly those impacted by domestic violence and DUI.
- Acquisition of Bauer Mental Health Services: Enables service for individuals under 18.
- Vegas Stronger offers a comprehensive range of services including:
 - Clinical assessments
 - Substance abuse and mental health treatment
 - PHP (Partial Hospitalization Program), IOP (Intensive Outpatient Program), and outpatient services
 - Gym, yoga, group therapy, case management

2. Outreach & Community Impact:

- Active presence at Clark County Detention Center (CCDC) and city jails
- Daily pickups for those in the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program
- Strong connection with individuals pre- and post-incarceration; many voluntarily remain in jail an extra 8 hours to join Vegas Stronger programs
- Participation in street outreach with local police (Metro) and social services to divert individuals from jail into care

3. "Golden Ticket" Program:

- An alternative to giving money or food to people on the street
- Provides individuals with a ticket containing Vegas Stronger's contact info, linking them directly to recovery resources

4. Growth & Demand:

- The number of clients has doubled since last year
- Projected to serve approximately 2,500 individuals this year
- Increasing referrals from city, county, jails, and the community
- Expanded services to include those not currently in the MAT program due to increased demand

5. Funding & Sustainability:

- Funded through a mix of:
 - Medicaid billing (though reimbursement is only partial)
 - State and federal grants
 - Private fundraising and philanthropy
- No denial of services based on insurance status

6. Facilities & Innovation:

- Equipped with a full gym, boxing space, sound therapy room, and clothing donations
- Offers transportation options, including bikes
- Creative approaches to holistic recovery, focusing on meeting people where they are

7. Challenges:

- Facing similar issues as other nonprofits: space limitations, need for more staffing and funding
- Monitoring potential federal funding uncertainties

The presentation ended with Commission members commending the program's innovation, passion, and life-changing impact.

- C. Reopening of By-Laws discussion regarding how Commission members are selected and presented as recommendations to the Legislative Commission.

After discussion and revision of points to approve the Commission agreed to submit language to be approved redlined to Commission members for careful review and vote to approve or not during the next public meeting.

- D. Commission on Minority Affairs participation on Diversity and Inclusion Liaison pursuant NRS 232.0083 – 232.0087

Chair Wyett provided background information on the Diversity and Inclusion Liaison initiative and Commission's participation for the past 2.5 years.

Considerations discussed:

- DIL meetings are work-intensive and require consistent commitment.
- Commissioners interested in participating should coordinate with Angie.
- Participation must avoid reaching a quorum, to comply with open meeting laws.
- Meetings are virtual, allowing for statewide access.
- Commissioners Jackson and Le expressed interest in joining and learning more about the initiative

Points addressed by legal counsel:

- DILs are primarily overseen by the State agency they fall under, not NCMA, ONA or NOHME directly
- It is permissible for commission members (less than a quorum) to participate but no cross communication should occur that inadvertently form a constructive quorum

- E. Subcommittee updates

HOUSING – COMMISSIONER JIMENEZ – WENZ

1. Local Engagements & Site Visits:

- Freedom House: Offers transitional housing, outpatient programs, and workforce support for individuals leaving incarceration or recovery.
- Anchor of Hope: A new nonprofit focused on reentry services, including transitional housing, financial literacy, behavioral health, and workforce development.
- Lotus Resource Center (North Las Vegas): Recently opened in partnership with Just One Project, providing housing, mental health, social services, and immigration assistance.

2. **Ongoing Community Involvement:**

- Participates monthly in the Nevada Housing Coalition luncheons, which provide legislative updates, new development info, and housing trends.
- Most recent discussions included AB540 and other legislation affecting housing during the 83rd Legislative Session.

3. **National Learning Opportunities:**

- Attended the Safety and Justice Conference in Chicago, hosted by the John and Catherine MacArthur Foundation, focused on reentry and reducing incarceration.
- Learned about alternatives to incarceration, such as mental health evaluations and community diversion programs.
- Visited Cook County Jail, where innovative practices—like processing arrestees at precincts—reduce jail intake and increase release efficiency.

4. **Reentry and Justice Reform Highlights:**

- Emphasis on housing support for former inmates.
- Inspired by programs in Miami-Dade County, where:
 - Restaurant taxes fund affordable and transitional housing.
 - Police use trauma-informed questioning to divert individuals from jail into supportive services.
 - Resulted in an 80% reduction in homelessness, especially among those previously living on beaches.

5. **Key Takeaways:**

- There's momentum in Clark County's reentry efforts, but valuable lessons can be drawn from cities like Chicago and Miami.
- Supports adopting similar strategies to reduce incarceration and homelessness locally through housing, services, and community investment.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – COMMISSIONER STEELE

□ **Historic Westside Education and Training Center:**

- A \$16.4 million, 15,000 sq. ft. workforce training facility broke ground in early May on C Street in Las Vegas.
- Aimed at providing credentialed job training in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and construction—industries offering high-demand, high-wage jobs.
- A collaborative project between the City of Las Vegas and the College of Southern Nevada (CSN).
- Inspired by a successful model in San Antonio, which expanded significantly after its launch.

□ **Nevada Works (Northern Nevada):**

- A regional hub offering free rapid skills training in healthcare, logistics, construction, IT, and advanced manufacturing.
- Notably integrating artificial intelligence (AI) both:
 - **Internally:** For data management and performance tracking.
 - **Externally:** To enhance training programs and provide job seekers with AI-related skills for modern workforce demands.

HEALTHCARE – COMMISSIONER GALLAGHER

Commissioner Gallagher shared a broad and passionate overview of healthcare challenges and efforts in Nevada, focusing on systemic gaps and community-driven solutions:

1. Healthcare Disparities & Awareness:

- April marked Minority Health Awareness Month, but more engagement and education are needed to reach underserved populations.
- Many individuals, especially in minority communities, avoid healthcare due to cultural norms, negative experiences, or lack of awareness.

2. Access and Continuity of Care:

- There's a push for collaborative, all-in-one healthcare models, where services like labs, doctors, and specialists are housed under one roof for better continuity.
- Organizations like Vegas Stronger serve as effective examples of wraparound service models.

3. Southern Nevada Health District Report:

- A new public health report gave Clark County a low performance rating ("D" grade) across multiple health indicators.
- Major issues include inconsistency in care, lack of continuity, and systemic inefficiencies.

4. Equity and Inclusion:

- Commissioner Gallagher emphasized that all Nevadans, including the undocumented and uninsured, should have equal access to quality healthcare.
- Language barriers and cultural disconnects, especially with the 30% Latino/Hispanic population, need targeted attention.

5. Nonprofit & Community Initiatives:

- Nonprofits are developing a 10-year health equity plan (by 2030) focused on reaching seniors, at-risk youth, individuals with mental health issues, and those in rural/"medical desert" areas.
- **Social determinants of health** like housing, transportation, and food security are also key focus areas.

6. Call to Action:

- Commissioner Gallagher urged the Commission to help bridge gaps through education, cross-sector collaboration, and actionable forums, not just discussions.
- Emphasized inclusion of all marginalized groups, including the elderly and disabled, in healthcare reform efforts.

Overall, Gallagher's message highlighted the urgent need for systemic change, inclusive practices, and community-centered solutions in Nevada's healthcare landscape.

K-12 EDUCATION – COMMISSIONER GINA JACKSON

Commissioner Jackson provided an in-depth overview of the current state and critical issues surrounding K–12 public education in Nevada, with an emphasis on equity, funding, and reform:

1. Urgency & Legislative Opportunity:

- The ongoing Nevada legislative session presents a pivotal moment for improving public education funding.
- Funding remains a central concern, especially for underserved and minority students, including tribal communities.

2. Current Education Landscape:

- Nevada consistently ranks near the bottom nationally in per-pupil funding and faces high teacher vacancy rates.
- Despite gains since COVID-19, Nevada still falls \$4,000 below the national average in per-pupil spending and needs an additional \$604 million over 10 years to close the gap.
- Class sizes remain the largest in the country.

3. Recent Legislative Developments:

- Governor Lombardo introduced the Educate Act, which proposes:
 - Extending 20% pay increases for teachers and staff.
 - Expanding teacher training pipelines.
 - Establishing universal pre-K for all four-year-olds in the state.

4. Data & Transparency:

- Launch of the Nevada Educator Workforce and Class Size Portal allows public access to real-time data on staffing, class sizes, and teacher retention.

5. Cultural & Community Initiatives:

- Participation in the American Indian/Alaska Native Education Summit highlighted needs for:
 - Culturally affirming curricula.
 - Tribal–school district collaboration.
 - Support for Native educator recruitment.

6. Equity and Student Support:

- Emphasis on uplifting minority students, foster youth, and expanding economic empowerment, mental health support, and family–school engagement.
- Focused attention on the needs of foster care youth, who face unique educational challenges due to instability.

7. Collaboration & Future Outlook:

- Working closely with Commissioner Lei on higher education to ensure alignment across the education continuum.
- Upcoming Education Academy on July 10 will provide post-session updates and policy directions based on final legislative outcomes.
 - Commissioner Jackson stressed the need for long-term investment in youth as the foundation for economic development and societal well-being.

HIGHER EDUCATION – COMMISSIONER KIM LE

1. Budget & Funding Landscape:

- NSHE Budget Increase: The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) budget rose by 15.1%, from \$2.48B (2023–2025) to \$2.86B (2025–2027).
- Federal Cuts: Despite the increase, federal budget cuts have negatively impacted:
 - Professional development
 - Teacher stipends and after school tutoring
 - Research programs, including major cuts to UNLV and UNR (loss of 43 grants totaling \$40M), affecting areas like mental health and Alzheimer’s research.

2. Positive Developments:

- Credit for Prior Learning Grant: NSHE received a \$20,000 grant under the *Constellation of Support* initiative to expand academic credit for non-traditional learning, such as work or military experience.

3. Key Legislative Bills:

- **SB 498:** Appropriates funds to expand undergraduate and graduate nursing programs to meet healthcare workforce demands.
- **AB 289:** Proposes a financial literacy course across Nevada higher ed institutions, covering budgeting, credit, debt management, and tax basics.
- **AB 345:** Calls for a data dashboard for student outcomes and affordable course material to improve transparency, cost-effectiveness, and policy decisions.

4. Outreach & Engagement:

- Met with:
 - Workforce coaches at West Charleston Library, which supports youth (16–24) with free career and college prep services.
 - Assemblywoman Erica Mosca, sponsor of AB 345, plans to speak at the upcoming July Academy.
 - Gio Moore, CCSD CTE Assistant Superintendent, to speak at the July Academy on career technical education (CTE) and counselor training.
- Participated in community events, including the Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival, fostering cultural engagement and legislative outreach.

5. Conclusion & Focus Areas:

- While the higher education budget has grown, federal cuts and resource reallocations have strained critical services and programs.
- Continued legislative advocacy, careful funding allocations, and collaboration with community and government partners are key to maintaining and enhancing higher education quality and competitiveness in Nevada.

Commissioner Le emphasized the need for sustained investment, policy reform, and inclusion of CTE and financial literacy to support student success statewide.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES – COMMISSIONERS ROMERO, WYETT, JIMENEZ WENZ, AND GALLAGHER

SB71 – Government Purchasing Reform:

- Aims to improve transparency and data collection in state purchasing to support Nevada businesses.
- Passed the Senate with a 20–1 vote.
- Now advancing through the Assembly; amended version removes the mentoring component, as existing resources already support business readiness.

AB52 – Prompt Payment Standards for Healthcare Providers:

- Focused on improving payment timelines for healthcare providers.
- Initially passed through Assembly Health and Human Services, now in the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, despite no fiscal note.
- Awaiting Senate committee assignment.

Team Collaboration & Nonpartisan Efforts:

- Commissioners Romero, Jimenez Wentz, Gallagher, and Chair White worked closely to educate legislators, attend meetings in Carson City, and advocate for both bills.
- Emphasized bipartisan support and positioned the Commission as a nonpartisan body working for all Nevadans.
- Their work helped sway some legislative votes and reinforced the Commission's credibility.

2. Legislative Process Reflection and Capacity Building:

- Commissioners, especially Jimenez Wentz and Gallagher, expressed appreciation for the educational value of engaging in the legislative process for the first time.
- Emphasized the importance of building a more sustainable, collaborative, and strategic Commission approach to bill development.
- Plans to outline and prepare new bills by next legislative session, with clearer roles and equitable workload distribution.

3. Additional Insight – Vice Chair on Healthcare & 1332 Waiver:

Section 1332 Waiver & Battle Born State Plan:

- Approved in January, this federal waiver allows Nevada to lower health insurance premiums via a state-run reinsurance program.
- Helps cover high-cost claims (e.g., for cancer treatment) and encourages more insurers to enter the Nevada market.
- Projected to lower premiums by 15% through 2030 without adding to the federal deficit.

\$322 Million Federal Pass-Through:

- Funds must be fully utilized, or the state risks losing the program.
- Intended for healthcare infrastructure, especially recruitment and housing for healthcare providers (e.g., projects in the Medical District).
- Emphasis on mental health and behavioral health funding as key areas for targeted investment.

Commission's Role:

- Commissioners are encouraged to research the 1332 Waiver and propose ideas for funding allocation to ensure it supports Nevada's critical healthcare needs.

Key Takeaways:

- The Commission's first legislative session was a hands-on learning experience, resulting in two promising bills (SB71 & AB52) progressing through the system.
- There is a growing focus on strategic legislative planning, ensuring future bills align with the Commission's mission.
- The 1332 Waiver and incoming federal funds present a huge opportunity for shaping Nevada's healthcare system — and the Commission is well-positioned to contribute ideas and oversight.

The following information was meant to be part of agenda item 3B, guest speakers' presentation, but there were issues connecting to the meeting.

Dr. Julio Landero, CEO of ABC Therapy introduced himself and announced the organization's recent merger with Vegas Stronger. ABC Therapy focuses on mental health and addiction services, working closely with the courts, probation, and Child Protective Services (CPS).

He attended the meeting at the request of Dr. Marlon and expressed a strong interest in:

- Learning more about the Commission's mission and history
- Exploring ways to collaborate on legislation, services, and community efforts

He acknowledged the current challenges with federal funding cuts and emphasized his commitment to staying involved, asking to be kept informed of future meetings and willing to make time to participate moving forward.

4. NEW BUSINESS (FOR DISCUSSION ONLY)

None

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (FOR DISCUSSION ONLY)

Deputy Director Marcel Schaerer expressed appreciation for the Commission's hard work and its positive impact on communities across Nevada. He acknowledged Commissioners Wyatt, Romero, Jiménez Wenz and Gallagher for their efforts, particularly in advancing AB 52 and SB 71, and for providing detailed and comprehensive reports.

6. NEXT MEETING

July 10, 2025

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jimenez Wenz moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Gallagher seconded it. The meeting was adjourned unanimously.