



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
4126 Technology Way, Suite 100
Carson City, Nevada 89706
Telephone (775) 684-4000 • Fax (775) 684-4010
<http://dhhs.nv.gov>

November 13, 2013
For Immediate Release
Contact: Mary Woods, PIO
(775) 684-4024

Governor's Consumer Health Advocate Appointment Announced

Carson City, NV – Mike Willden, Director of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is proud to announce the appointment of Janise Holmes as the Governor's Consumer Health Advocate. Holmes has served as the Interim Governor's Consumer Health Advocate since July 1, 2013. In this position, Holmes will continue to manage the Office for Consumer Health Assistance, which includes oversight of the Office of Minority Health; the Small Business Insurance Education Program; the Bureau for Hospital Patients; Affordable Care Act education programs; and Ombudsmen who help consumers understand the complex health care system.

The Office for Consumer Health Assistance provides statewide advocacy and education to healthcare consumers and providers. The office helps individuals understand their rights and responsibilities under the new federal Affordable Care Act, resolve hospital billing disputes, audit hospital charges, review and resolve physician billing disputes, and negotiate charity or discounted payment arrangements. In addition, it helps people locate health care services available in their community, resolve workers compensation issues, and locate coverage for prescription drugs.

Consumer health assistance is available free of charge, irrespective of an individual's health insurance coverage, and can even help people apply for insurance including Medicaid, Medicare, NV Check Up (the state's insurance for children), or for a qualified health plan through Nevada Health Link (Nevada's new health insurance marketplace). The office responded to over 19,500 inquiries last year and investigated more than 3,600 complaints on behalf of consumers.

Previous to this position, Holmes worked as an Ombudsman in the Office of Consumer Health Assistance, advocating for Nevadans and connecting them to resources. Ms. Holmes has served Nevadans for over 15 years in various other capacities, including as a Case Manager with a local non-profit, Aid for AIDS of Nevada; Senior Protective Case Manager with Clark County Social Service; Intensive Re-entry Case Manager with the State of Nevada Department of Corrections; and Health Care Coordinator with the State of Nevada's Division of Health Care Financing and Policy. She is a Licensed Social Worker in the State of Nevada who received both her Bachelor of Social Work and her Master of Public Administration degrees from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

"More than ever, the Office of Consumer Health Assistance has an important role to play in helping Nevadans understand the complex changes facing the health care system," said Amber Joiner, Deputy Director, DHHS. "Janise's understanding of the health care landscape and experience advocating on behalf of consumers make her the ideal leader of the Office as it continues to provide exceptional service to Nevadans who need help navigating the health care system and accessing care."

###