

December 22, 2015

Richard Whitley, Director
Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
4126 Technology Way, Suite 100
Carson City, NV 89706

Dear Mr. Whitley:

During the December 10, 2015, meeting of the Grants Management Advisory Committee (GMAC), staff of the Grants Management Unit (GMU) presented a plan for the 2016 Statewide Community Needs Assessment. As you know, per Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 439.630, this assessment is conducted in even-numbered years in order to establish funding priorities for the Fund for a Healthy Nevada (FHN).

The GMAC voted to approve the GMU's plan for the assessment and, in language added to that motion, the GMAC also voted to encourage you to utilize the results of the assessment beyond the confines of the FHN.

Assessments conducted in 2012 and 2014 produced useful information about service gaps that cannot be addressed by the FHN. Some are not even within the scope of authority of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). For example, both the 2012 and 2014 assessments fleshed out a variety of needs in the areas of housing, employment, education, youth enrichment and safety.

Capitalizing on the assessment is not exactly a new idea. The concluding paragraph of the 2012 report noted that: "Although the gathering of input from the public was intended for use in the determination of the allocation of the FHN, it has become apparent from the extensive input from the community that the results of this assessment may have a more far reaching impact in the development of grant awards from other funding streams. The priorities identified in this report may also be of assistance in the development of future budget recommendations for the DHHS as a whole, working toward the reduction of information silos and the increased collaboration in strategic planning."

As the GMU begins to conduct the 2016 Statewide Community Needs Assessment, members of the GMAC want to encourage you to utilize the process and the findings in the broad manner characterized in the 2012 report. While statutory compliance is important, our work should not stop there. Advisory committee members, administrators, legislators and other leaders should tap into every available resource to ensure that the needs of Nevadans are identified and addressed. This is the best way to make the most effective use of limited dollars while building strong communities and a strong state. Thank you for your consideration of our recommendation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fontaine, Chairperson
Grants Management Advisory Committee