

# OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH AND EQUITY 2023-2024 BIENNIAL REPORT

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*March 2025*



Department of Health and Human Services

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*Governor*  
*State of Nevada*

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## CONTENTS

Executive Summary (including NOMHE Staffing) .....	4
Vision, Mission, and Purpose .....	5
NOMHE Advisory Committee .....	5
Signature Events .....	7
Key Accomplishments .....	11

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE) seeks to effectively fulfill its mission of addressing health-related disparities among minority groups in Nevada. Per NRS 232.467-232.474, NOMHE was created to improve the quality of health care services for members of minority groups; increase access to health care services for members of minority groups; disseminate information to and educate the public on matters concerning health care issues of interest to members of minority groups; develop recommendations for changes in policy; and advocate on behalf of minority groups.

Meeting these responsibilities is made possible in large part by NOMHE's health literacy initiatives and outreach efforts and is reflected throughout the entries shared under the **Signature Events** and **Key Accomplishments** sections of this report. NOMHE continues to engage in informational activities and foster partnerships with stakeholder groups, including community and faith-based organizations; schools and universities; medical centers, health care systems and health departments; tribal, state, and federal government offices; policymakers and residents; advisory committees and task forces. NOMHE ensures that entities create, and the community at large has access to, culturally competent and linguistically appropriate health information presented in accessible formats. NOMHE sustained programs and responsibilities during 2023 and 2024, as reflected in its staffing levels (augmented by grant-funded contract personnel) and ensuring no vacancies among membership of its Advisory Committee. This report highlights NOMHE's vision, purpose, advisory committee compliance, signature events, and key accomplishments.

## VISION AND MISSION

NOMHE’s vision is to achieve optimal levels of health and wellness for all minority groups and marginalized communities across the state. Its mission is to avoid and/or reverse disproportionately experienced, health-related disparities among the state’s most vulnerable, high-risk populations.

## PURPOSE

NOMHE carries out its vision and mission by supporting educational and awareness-building opportunities with equity-focused partners, cultivating equity-focused collaboratives and amplifying initiatives that promote health equity principles. NOMHE’s efforts serve to combat disproportionately experienced health disparities among the community while ending disadvantages due to socially determined circumstances.

NOMHE’s efforts are supported by its Advisory Committee.

## NOMHE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The responsibilities of the Advisory Committee are specified at NRS 232.484. The committee consists of nine members appointed by either the State Board of Health or the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services and consideration must be given to whether the members reflect the ethnic and geographical diversity of this State as well as those having notable interest in health issues related to minorities, come from a nonprofit or health care sector or represent the public at large (NRS 232.482).

The Advisory Committee fulfilled its duties, having met and advised the NOMHE Program Manager each quarter of 2023 and 2024. Members provided feedback on the State’s **2022-2023 Maternal Mortality and Severe Maternal Morbidity Report** as required by NRS 442.767 to ensure its recommendations reflected an equity perspective, such as emphasizing the importance of accessible transportation and inclusion of psychiatry as a resource during pregnancy. Members also established NOMHE’s first subcommittee, the **Black Leadership Advisory Committee (BLAC)**. This ad-hoc committee served from February 2023 to February 2024.

As of December 2024, the Advisory Committee was fully seated as follows:

Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity (NOMHE) Advisory Committee Members

Name Organizational or Community Affiliation	Ethnicity and/or Race	Geographic Location	Initial Appointment Date
Nicholas J. Dunkle (CHAIR) School of Medicine, University of Nevada, Reno	Latino	Northern Nevada	December 2022
Dr. Samuel Hickson, Ph.D. (Vice Chair) M3 Wake Research	Hispanic	Southern Nevada	May 2022
Bishop Bonnie L. Radden The Gathering Place	Caucasian	Southern Nevada	August 2024
Dr. Andrew Thomas Reyes, Ph.D., RN University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Asian/Pacific Islander	Southern Nevada	June 2024
Nancy J. Bowen Nevada Primary Care Association	Caucasian	Northern Nevada	December 2022
Rev. Dr. Debra A. Whitlock Lax Bethel AME Church	African American	Northern Nevada	December 2022
Tiara Flynn Founder/Owner, The Phenomenal Mama	African American	Southern Nevada	June 2024
Margarita "Maggie" Salas Crespo NReal Media Strategies	Latina	Southern Nevada	September 2023
Angela "Angie" Wilson Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Tribal Health Center	Native American	Northern Nevada	July 2024

*Per statute, one legislator serves as an ex-officio member, and this member is appointed by the Legislative Commission to serve on the Advisory Committee. During the 2023-2024 Senator Pat Spearman served in this ex-officio, non-voting role.*

## SIGNATURE EVENTS

### May 18, 2023 — Discussion on Community Engagement and Clinical Trial Diversification

NOMHE partnered with Renown Health, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, High Sierra Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), Healthy NV Project, and several other groups to facilitate presentations and discussions regarding the inclusion of minority and underrepresented groups in order to diversify clinical trial inclusion.

**Notable outcomes:** Further solidified Northern Nevada partnerships and engaged numerous partners in the discussion for a more diverse clinical trial inclusion.

### May 30, 2023 — Completion of the Health Equity Action Plan

NOMHE completed its Health Equity Action Plan (HEAP), which aims to help government institutions, agencies, and organizations across the state integrate health equity considerations into their work by providing a framework to examine and challenge practices that perpetuate health inequities. [The report is available online at this link.](#) NOMHE staff is available to provide technical assistance upon request regarding its application.

**Notable outcomes:** The distribution of information, data, and recommendations for governmental institutions to incorporate best practices in reduce inequities.

### August 15, 2023 — Networking Stakeholder Breakfast in Reno

NOMHE hosted the annual Networking Stakeholder Breakfast at the Renown Professional Circle Building in Reno. This event aimed to facilitate connections and collaboration between community-based organizations and various State agencies. NOMHE hosted representatives from diverse organizations, including the Northern Nevada International Center, which offers Language Access services, and Liberty Dental, the Managed Care Organization for Medicaid in the State of Nevada.

**Notable outcomes:** NOMHE hosted approximately 40 representatives from numerous organizations throughout Nevada in order to improve collaboration from around the state.

### August 29, 2023 — Health Literacy Event at Clark County Library

The event was designed to create a platform where DHHS programs and other community-based organizations could offer their services and resources to older populations. Among the participating state organizations were the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services and the Aging of Disability and Services Division, while local organizations included the Southern Nevada Health District and Nevada Senior Services.

**Notable outcomes:** Approximately 65 community members attended the event and received information and local resources from numerous agencies.

## September 15, 2023 — Collaboration with Southern Nevada Health District to Promote the “5210 Campaign” (Childhood Obesity Awareness)

For the second year in a row, NOMHE continues to team with the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) to support its 5210 initiative, which aims to increase awareness about childhood obesity. Expanding on the success of previous collaborations, NOMHE coordinated the participation of the entities such as the City of Las Vegas and Planned Parenthood to organize a resource fair event in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. This was an evening event that occurred at Freedom Park in East Las Vegas. During this event, NOMHE hosted an interactive booth featuring engaging games and the chance to win prizes for participating children, all while actively promoting resources commissioned by NOMHE or other DHHS programs, while supporting the SNHD 5210 initiative.

**Notable outcomes:** NOMHE had the privilege of engaging with more than 50 Hispanic families, and estimates that the booth saw participation from more than 100 children.

## October 17, 2023 — Cleveland Clinic / NOMHE “Breaking Barriers” event

NOMHE’s ongoing partnership with Cleveland Clinic resulted in the “Breaking Barriers” highlighting the prevalence and importance of Alzheimer’s and other dementia screening and diagnosis as it relates to clinical trial diversity. Designed as a panel discussion and networking reception, the event provided an opportunity for community advocates and organizations to learn more about local clinical trial efforts and the importance of participation and awareness of clinical trials.

**Notable outcome:** Per NOMHE’s contributions, the event had over 50 attendees representing over 25 community organizations, 5 community leaders, and 10 health care organizations.

## April 17, 2024 — Cultivating a Culture of Inclusivity in the Workplace Training

NOMHE was invited to conduct its Cultivating a Culture of Inclusivity in the Workplace Training for the Department of Health and Human Services’ Aging and Disabilities Services Division (ADSD) during its annual professional development conference in Reno. NOMHE’s focus was to educate participants about the latest developments and challenges in the aging and disability services sector in Nevada, foster collaborative networks among state agencies, providers, governments and consumers, improved service delivery, equity, and inspire innovative solutions for the aging and disability population. This training is designed to be repeated.

**Notable Outcomes:** NOMHE received a second invitation to serve as a guest speaker to a DHHS division-level conference for both Northern and Southern Nevada.

## April 29, 2024 — Virtual Session of Cultivating a Culture of Inclusivity in the Workplace Training

NOMHE coordinated and conducted a one-day virtual training session for Family Resource Centers across northern, rural, and southern Nevada. The session, titled "Cultivating a Culture of Inclusivity in the Workplace," covered key topics such as Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) in the workplace, Implicit Bias, Microaggressions, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Trauma-Informed Care. During the activity portion, participants collaborated to create a universal DEI statement for their centers.



**Notable Outcomes:** A total of 13 Family Resource Centers created their Universal Health Disparities Statement

#### July 24, 2024 — Diversity and Inclusion Liaison (DIL) Annual Meeting

This meeting brings together state and municipal employees who volunteer as agency DILs and Minority Serving Organizations (MSOs) to discuss how these agency representatives can further assist minorities, as required per NRS 232.0083-232.0087. DILs are supported by the Nevada Commission on Minority Affairs, the Governor’s Office for New Americans and NOMHE — collectively known as the Minority Interagency Collaboration (MIC). During the annual meeting, attendees heard from State Senator Melanie Scheible (sponsor of the legislation) on her views regarding this statute. MSOs and DILs had the opportunity to discuss barriers to access experienced by minority and/or underrepresented communities and to brainstorm how to address service delivery gaps. The discussion that happened between MSOs and DILs was incorporated into the 2024 DIL Annual Report prepared by MIC and submitted to the Governor and Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**Notable outcomes:** This gathering represented the third DIL/MSO Annual Meeting. This year the MIC coordinated five virtual trainings for DILs entitled “Diversity and Inclusion Liaison 101; Cultural Competency on Interacting with LGBTQ Community; Cultural Competency on Interacting with People with Disabilities; Cultivating a Culture of Inclusivity; and Systemic Racism.” Each session was recorded so that current/future DILs may take advantage of this information.

#### September 11, 2024 — Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression (SOGIE) Essentials: Best Practices for Inclusive Data Collection Training

In 2024, NOMHE created the "SOGIE Essentials: Best Practices for Inclusive Data Collection" training. This module while not statutorily required, was designed to align with NRS 239B.026, and conducted to aid public-facing DHHS staff perform intake services and/or implement best practices when collecting data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE). It covers key topics, including defining SOGIE, promoting inclusivity in data collection, and providing resources and tools to support the process. While especially relevant for employees who work with the public, support intake processes, or collect demographic data, the training is open to all staff.

**Notable outcomes:** NOMHE’s trainings are in high demand, with this inaugural session receiving very positive feedback.

#### October 29, 2024 — Channel 13 Advocacy Fair

NOMHE was invited to join this highly visible/heavily promoted Channel 13 resource event located on the campus of the College of Southern Nevada. NOMHE provided valuable information on stress management and mental health to community college students and community members of all ages. The event had strong attendance, allowing NOMHE to promote a variety of available mental health resources.

**Notable outcomes:** Amplified NOMHE recognition in the health literacy space. Established additional promotional opportunities.

#### November 2, 2024 — Moapa Valley Community Resources Fair

NOMHE offered a wide range of educational materials and resources, curated in response to diverse health-related needs of rural Nevadans. The event attracted participants of all ages, so NOMHE's broad selection of resources was well-suited to the diverse demographics of the audience.

**Notable outcome:** NOMHE interacted with approximately 70 individuals. Resources shared included information on the [ArrayRx Discount Card prescription program](#) and the national 988 suicide and crisis hotline.

#### November 13, 2024 — Family and Homes Series: Know Your Rental Rights

This event took place at the Mexican Consulate in Las Vegas and was a joint effort involving Research, Education and Access to Community Health (REACH) Las Vegas, the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, Councilwoman Olivia Diaz, and the NOMHE team. The event saw strong participation and delivered hands-on assistance and resources to individuals and families facing challenges related to rental and tenant rights. The session was highly informative, creating an opportunity to connect essential resources directly with those in need. Additionally, it served as a successful pilot for an easily replicable event model that can be extended to other audiences on the topic.

**Notable outcome:** The event was promoted and presented with an emphasis on Spanish as the preferred language, thus ensuring comprehension by the surrounding residents and clients of the Mexican Consulate.

#### November 15, 2024 — Nevada Minority Health Equity Coalition (NMHEC) Impact Summit

The 2024 biennial convening of the NMHEC Impact Summit took place at UNLV was planned and co-facilitated with NOMHE. Its theme, "Strategic Shift: Integrating Social Determinants Into Equitable Practices," was highlighted by policy, research and advocacy themed breakout sessions with the highlight being the keynote address by nationally recognized Dr. Khama Ennis. The Impact Summit has become a highly anticipated event in the health equity space, aimed to unite public health professionals. NOMHE successfully organized two panel discussions addressing food insecurity and housing instability.

**Notable outcome:** Approximately 200 attendees drawing from public, private, governmental and academic sectors. NOMHE used the opportunity to promote its inaugural Nutritional Health Literacy Survey.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### NOMHE Advisory Committee's Black Leadership Advisory Council (BLAC) Subcommittee

The BLAC operated as a temporary subcommittee within NOMHE's Advisory Committee. Its mission was to pinpoint opportunities for enhancing the living conditions of Black/African American residents throughout Nevada. The resulting work of the BLAC was intended to serve as a catalyst for change and advocacy for diversity and equity. BLAC consisted of its Chair (Dr. Samuel Hickson) and eight members across the following categories: health and wellness (Alisa Howard and Will Rucker); public safety in educational environments (Kamilah Bywaters); public policy, law and government (Adrienne Feemster Cobb and Robert Bush); communication, arts, and culture in the Black Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community (Jewel Eldridge); environmental challenges in vulnerable communities (Mary House); and Black faith-based communities (Derek Rimson).

Under the direction of the BLAC's Chair, Dr. Hickson, and with assistance from NOMHE staff, its members met several times between February 2023 and February 2024 to complete a report entitled, "A Snapshot of Factors Influencing Black and African American Wellness in Nevada." The purpose of this report is to comprehensively examine the multifaceted health disparities faced by Black Nevadans, particularly focusing on the impact of systemic inequities, barriers to health care access, and social determinants of health. The report was shared with strategic partners whose work relates to bridging minority group inequities for consideration and actioning of its recommendations.

### UNR "Faith and Health Report - Community Health Worker Pilot Program"

Between 2023-2024, NOMHE partnered with the UNR Larson Institute for Health Impact and Equity, designing and funding their Community Health Worker Pilot Program. Through the pilot, the Larson Institute implemented an outreach and education initiative with program coordination assistance from its subrecipient, the Nevada Faith and Health Coalition. Congregants were recruited from churches to be trained and certified as Community Health Workers (CHW) to support the reduction of health disparities within their local communities.

In addition to the standard CHW educational programming required for certification, two additional in-person trainings were designed to increase expertise deemed highly relevant to the population being served:

1. "With Every Heartbeat is Life (WEHL) Train the Trainer" — This evidence-based curriculum is designed for CHWs to teach the Black community about heart health. Facilitated by Southern Nevada Health District
2. "Policy and Advocacy: Youth Mental Health" — This training covered mental health and policy and the intersection of mental health policy, advocacy, and special topics related to youth and LGBTQIA+ issues. Facilitated by Larson Institute for Health Impact and Equity

There were also asynchronous training modules designed to expand upon existing public health knowledge for CHWs on various topics including media literacy, civil legal barriers to health, self-care and burnout prevention, advocacy for wellness, and addressing the social determinants of health (level I and II). Facilitated by the Larson Institute for Health Impact and Equity.

### NOMHE's 2024 – 2026 Strategic Plan

A strategic plan was developed outlining the 2024-2026 direction for NOMHE. The plan empowers the

office to effectively fulfill its mission of addressing health-related disparities among minority groups in Nevada. Per NRS 232.467 – 232.474, NOMHE was created to improve the quality of health care services for members of minority groups; increase access to health care services for members of minority groups; disseminate information to and educate the public on matters concerning health care issues of interest to members of minority groups; and develop recommendations for changes in policy and advocate on behalf of minority groups. In the development of the strategic plan, NOMHE staff conducted a series of proceedings to collect feedback. These included a comprehensive internal assessment of NOMHE’s environment to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges, while also defining NOMHE staff’s organizational objectives and aspirations. The process also included an internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and a strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR) analysis. External perspective was obtained through a partner survey and interviews to evaluate NOMHE’s responsiveness to the community and to gain deeper insights into community needs and assess NOMHE’s effectiveness and visibility in its current efforts.

By closely examining all information using both deductive (starting with general ideas) and inductive (starting with specific details) methods, and taking into consideration NOMHE’s statutory requirements, seven strategic aims to improve NOMHE’s operations were derived:

1. Strategic workforce development: Enhance staff skills, knowledge, and capacity through targeted training.
2. Revitalize and identity focus: Clarify and strengthen NOMHE’s organizational identity, and strategic focus to effectively address health disparities.
3. Product and program expansion: Expand NOMHE’s portfolio of programs and initiatives to address emerging health needs and gaps.
4. Financial resilience and resource sustainability: Develop and implement strategies to diversify funding sources, optimize resource allocation and strengthen financial sustainability.
5. Demonstrate meaningful impact: Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track outcomes and impact of NOMHE’s programs and initiatives.
6. Cultivate strategic alliances: Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with key partners, including government agencies.
7. Elevate visibility and engagement: Enhance NOMHE’s visibility and engagement with partners and the community.

Under each aim, specific activities are outlined to guide NOMHE toward success in serving the community, maintaining focus and effectively allocating resources. By 2026, NOMHE aims to be a trusted resource and reliable leader recognized in the health equity space. The plan was adopted in 2024, including the implementation of action plans and ongoing evaluation protocols to measure progress towards NOMHE’s objectives.

### **Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) Report on “Establishing an Office of Health Equity or Minority Health”**

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of State Office of Minority Health (NASOMH) partnered to hold discussions with nine high-performing state offices of minority health (including NOMHE) to collect information on how they are established, structured and funded, and the role of partnerships. NOMHE was recognized for creating a customizable equity lens (i.e.

its “Choice Point Thinking Guide”) that can be employed to ensure the equitable decision making or resource allocation.

The resulting report highlighted best practices undertaken and lessons learned by the nine organizations and has been distributed through ASTHO and NASOMH national channels. With the nine offices serving as individual case studies, readers are provided important considerations for setting up and sustaining a health equity/minority health office, especially in a resource-challenged environment.

#### **Workforce Diversification / Public Health Pipeline Initiative: NOMHE’s Internship Program**

As of December 2024, NOMHE has hosted 11 student interns. Graduate and undergraduate level interns from UNR or UNLV are matched with a preceptor from the NOMHE staff and mentored through the semester. Through weekly check-ins and independently guided work, interns complete a deliverable by the end of their internship. Previous deliverables have included: a Nutritional Access and Nutritional Literacy in Nevada survey; flyers and informative resources on local health care resources in Nevada; and a portfolio of outreach efforts and community engagement.