

DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or library@lcb.state.nv.us.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 188, Section 15
Presented to the Senate Finance Committee
March 26, 2003

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Steve Tognoli. I am the district chief with the Mason Valley Fire Protection District. During the 2001 Interim, I also served as Vice-chairman of the Governor's Task Force for the Development of a Strategic Plan for Rural Healthcare. I am here today on behalf of the task force and Robin Keith, Taskforce Chairperson, who could not be here this morning. I will confine my brief remarks to Section 15 of the bill, which deals with data collection.

The development of the Rural Strategic Plan was mandated by the 2001 Legislature. The task force took that mandate seriously and worked diligently to deliver back to the Legislature a quality product that could drive intelligent decision making for years to come. I am here today because the lack of current, consistent, verifiable data made the process infinitely more difficult, and, I am sorry to say, had an adverse effect on the quality of the end product.

I am sensitive to the time constraints, so will give you only one specific example. The task force tried to determine how many healthcare professionals (across many disciplines) would be needed in rural Nevada in the future. The obvious starting point involved knowing how many are out there now, so that the gap could be quantified. We could not achieve that seemingly simple task because everywhere we went we found we were counting the same physician (or other practitioner) over and over. For example, Dr. Smith lives in Gardnerville, works in Carson City, and does visiting-specialist clinics in Lyon and Churchill counties. He would appear four times in our count. This problem became so complex that we could not solve it within the time and money allotted. We finally had to eliminate important supporting information from the report.

We believe it is imperative that we utilize our scarce resources wisely. This means decisions must be made on objective facts, not solely opinion and emotion. Section 15 of the bill is intended to start us down the road toward achieving fact-based decision-making by placing responsibility for collecting relevant data about rural healthcare in a very appropriate place – the Nevada Office of Rural Health.

It should be pointed out that a great deal of data exists in the state. Re-inventing all of that is not our intent. Rather, the data collection function will:

- Determine the data sets necessary for collection in partnership with rural and frontier stakeholders and state officials;
- Determine the health policy considerations of lawmakers concerning issues such as obstetrical care and health workforce needs in order to establish baseline data needs;
- Collect and analyze data and information in order to forecast economic and health interventions and outcomes; and,
- Assist policy makers and programs with data and information by which to make healthcare improvements in Nevada's rural and frontier populations and healthcare systems.

EXHIBIT Q Senate Committee on Finance

Date 3-26-03 Page 1 of 3

The fiscal impact is \$366,750 for the biennium.

In conclusion, the Rural Task Force included the creation of a central data repository in its final recommendations so that Legislators, Regulators, and the many entities that work in the field would all have access to sound information upon which to base intelligent policy and implementation decisions. SB 188 implements that recommendation. The Office of Rural Health is ideal for the purpose because

- It is focused on the whole rural healthcare system, not isolated components;
- Existing staff has the expertise necessary to do the job;
- It already houses a great deal of state and federal information, reducing duplication of effort; and,
- It has existing and productive relationships on the federal level that will be enhanced with objective, organized data. This bridge between quantified need and access to federal resources can translate into more grants for Nevada.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope you will support SB 188. I would be happy to answer any questions.