

Legislators Pledge to Support Nevadans for the Common Good on Medicaid, Education

Las Vegas, NV – Addressing the state’s teacher shortage and ensuring that a plan to privatize some Medicaid services in Nevada is transparent and includes meaningful public participation are top priorities for Nevadans for the Common Good (NCG).

They are also goals supported Tuesday (Oct. 27) by Nevada legislative leaders who attended a Nevadans for the Common Good assembly at Temple Sinai in Las Vegas.

“These issues are crucial to our community and we are pleased to have support from our elected leaders,” said the Rev. Dr. Marta Poling-Goldenne of Reformation Lutheran Church, co-chair of the assembly meeting. “In the last legislative session, these leaders stood up for education and for senior citizens. We appreciate their commitments to help again.”

Before a capacity crowd of 300 people, Assembly Majority Leader Paul Anderson (R-Las Vegas) said he supports an open and transparent process in the State’s analysis of privatizing Medicaid services for the elderly, blind and disabled and will call on the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that waiver recipients and other community stakeholders can meaningfully participate in the planning process.

“Insurance companies have met privately with state officials to discuss the privatization proposal. We want the State to grant equal access to recipients of these services. They have the most at stake and deserve to have a seat at the table. We are pleased that Assemblyman Anderson will help us achieve this goal,” said Barbara Paulsen of Boulder City United Methodist Fellowship, a member of Nevadans for the Common Good.

Senate Majority Leader Michael Roberson (R-Henderson) and Senator Joyce Woodhouse (D-Henderson) committed to making the teacher shortage crisis a top priority and working with Nevadans for the Common Good to address this issue. The organization is calling on State officials to include the teacher shortage in a special session of the Legislature. Nevadans for the Common Good also plans to raise the issue with the Clark County School Board.

In the waning hours of the 2015 session of the Nevada Legislature, language was added to the appropriations bill to allow privatization of the state’s Medicaid Waiver for Home and Community-Based Services, without a public hearing. Medicaid is the state-run health care program for low-income individuals in Nevada. The waiver program allows Medicaid funds to be used for home-care services that allow the blind, elderly and persons with disability to continue to live in their homes, rather than be institutionalized.

“We are concerned that the effort to privatize Medicaid has lacked transparency thus far and that it could endanger delivery of needed services to some of the most vulnerable citizens of our state,” said Paulsen.

There are 780 teacher vacancies in the Clark County School District and the shortage is concentrated in high-poverty schools, said Poling-Goldenne. The teacher shortage crisis

threatens the implementation of the various education programs that were funded during the most recent legislative session.

Nevadans for the Common Good is a nonpartisan, broad-based organization of 39 churches, synagogues and community nonprofits that are working together to improve the quality of life in Nevada. The purpose of the community assembly was to call for help on these new issues and to thank Legislators for their efforts in the 2015 session.

“We recognize the courage that many of these legislators showed in voting to support the Governor’s plan to increase funding for public education in our state and we wanted to show them that we and many Nevadans are grateful,” said the Rev. Dennis Hutson of Advent United Methodist Church.

Assembly Speaker John Hambrick (R-Las Vegas), Senator Becky Harris (R-Las Vegas), Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams (D-Las Vegas), Assemblyman Elliot Anderson (D-Las Vegas), Assemblywoman Dina Neal (D-Las Vegas), Assemblyman Erv Nelson (R- Las Vegas), Assemblywoman Ellen Spiegel (D-Las Vegas), and Assemblyman Glenn Trowbridge (R-Las Vegas) also attended the meeting.

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