



State-Level Leadership for Children’s Mental Health



Children’s
Advocacy
ALLIANCE

Nevada Needs a Leader for Child Mental Health

In the U.S., **49.5%** of children have a mental health disorder and **nearly 60%** of those children do **not receive any treatment**.*

Nevada’s existing “system of care” for youth with mental and behavioral health issues overutilizes **hospitalization** and **out-of-state residential treatment facilities** that do not provide adequate support and separate children from their families. Nevada needs centralized leadership to address this crisis and bring more community-based options to our state.

Building a healthier future for Nevada’s youth, together!



Recommendation

Nevada needs a **cohesive, statewide** effort to create community-based mental health services for children through an **Office of Children’s Mental and Behavioral Health**.

Nevada’s Child Mental and Behavioral Health Landscape

- Families in Nevada rely on **emergency services as a primary source** of behavioral healthcare.
- Many children are **repeatedly hospitalized** for behavioral health care due to insufficient community-based services.
- **Pediatric psychiatric admissions** rose from 1,460 in 2017 to 1,721 in 2020.
- Nevada has three volunteer mental health consortia and a Commission subcommittee that have produced strategic plans for child mental health. However, they **lack funding, support, and authority** to address the children’s mental health needs effectively.
- The Department of Justice found Nevada violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by **overusing institutionalization** of children with behavioral and mental health disorders. In response, Nevada has focused on creating **more community-based services** and should continue its concerted efforts to expand access to **quality** resources and care.

Integrating the Office to address statewide needs in Nevada

The Office of Children’s Mental and Behavioral Health is different from the existing state consortia and commission on mental health. The Office of Children’s Mental and Behavioral Health is meant to be an action-focused connector across the whole state. The office will have capacity to consistently support youth mental and behavioral health throughout the year.

The Administrator of the Office will:

Implement and evaluate a statewide strategic plan to address children’s mental and behavioral health;
Make recommendations for policy and practice to address youth with mental and behavioral needs;
Improve access to youth mental and behavioral care within Nevada communities; and more.

This Office will increase access to community-based mental health services for children, which is a major area of need for Nevada. The state subcommittee and consortia have created detailed plans and needs assessments. The Office will work cooperatively with the commission and consortia to implement their solutions, and track which initiatives support vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities, and those in foster care.



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*Please reach out for the list of references