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DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

February 13, 2003

Senator William Raggio, Senate Finance Chairman
Assemblyman Morse Arberry, Jr., Assembly Ways and Means Chairman
Nevada State Legislature
Legislative Building, Capital Complex
Carson City, NV 89701-4747

RE: Health Aid to Counties Funds (Budget #3209)

Dear Senator Raggio and Assemblyman Arberry:

The Washoe County District Health Department's current fiscal crisis is the result of a combination of factors: the loss of the Health Aid to Counties funds and the forecasted 7% reduction in financial support from Washoe County. It is a devastating combination.

For fiscal year 2002/2003, Health Aid to Counties funds appropriated for the Washoe County District Health Department totaled \$276,804. Due to the State's budget crisis, the funds were reduced to \$89,831. The Health District has managed the loss of these funds through salary savings created by a 10% vacancy rate.

For fiscal year 2003/2004, adjusting for increased population, the District Health Department had projected revenues of \$293,560 in Health Aid to Counties funds. However, all Health Aid to Counties funds have been eliminated for fiscal year 2003/2004.

The Health Aid to Counties funds fully supported an environmentalist position, which performed inspections in permitted food facilities and special food events, to protect residents and visitors from foodborne illnesses; and the Department's web master, a critical position that provided public health information, education and risk communication to the public and health care providers. This role is essential before, during and after an emergency, in addition to routine information sharing. Health Aid to Counties funds also provided partial support for several programs, including immunizations, public health nurse home visiting, emergency medical services, air quality management, sexually transmitted diseases, and chronic disease and injury prevention.

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SUBCOMMITTEE K-12 / HUMAN RESOURCES
DATE: 2-13-03 EXHIBIT F
SUBMITTED BY: B HUNT, WASHOE HEALTH DEPT

1001 EAST NINTH STREET / P.O. BOX 11130, RENO, NEVADA 89520 (775) 328-2400 FAX (775) 328-2279

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Restoration of Health Aid to Counties funds could provide support to one or more programs currently recommended for significant budget reductions, particularly those programs unable to continue providing services to clients that other community providers may also be unable to serve. These include, but are not limited to:

- Family Planning Clinic services (currently recommended for reduction in services of one third, affecting 1,000 clients)
- Public Health Nurse Home Visiting, which focuses on child abuse and neglect prevention (currently recommended for reduction in services of one third, eliminating one nurse position)
- Routine Tuberculosis skin testing and medical management of latent tuberculosis
- Immunizations (currently recommended for reductions in hours of service by one third)
- WIC (transfer of the program to another community agency, if possible).

On February 20, 2003, the Washoe County District Board of Health will review all options for reducing the District Health Department budget, including programs not currently recommended for reductions in services, before approving its final proposed fiscal year 2003/2004 budget. The Board will approve a proposed budget for fiscal year 2003/2004 in March 2003, which will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for tentative approval in April 2003.

I understand and appreciate the very difficult financial issues that you will decide this session. Thank you for your consideration of the Washoe County District Health Department's request for restoration of Health Aid to Counties funds to assist in the provision of essential public health services to our community.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee Hunt, RN, MPA
District Health Officer

cc: Joint Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Committee
Members

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