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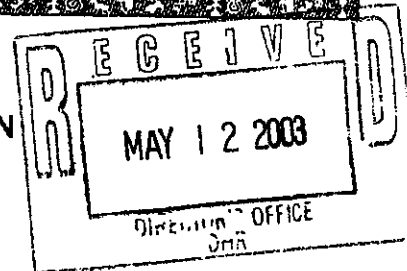
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND FACILITIES ON MAY 12, 2003 RE: SCR 36



Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: Good afternoon. My name is Susan Rhodes, and I am a Social Work Supervisor at Clark County Social Service. It has been my privilege to serve as the Chair of the Senior Services Task Force and as such, and on behalf of, the entire Task Force, to now sit before you and ask for your support in favor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 36.

The goal of the Task Force was to provide a long term strategic plan addressing the health care needs and concerns of Nevada's growing senior population. While such a project may seem daunting on the surface, it was tackled with a great deal of enthusiasm and vitality, since all of us involved in this project realized that an opportunity such as this does not come about very often.

The strategic plan itself begins with a vision that states: *that all seniors in Nevada are knowledgeable, secure, respected, and able to make choices towards health, hope, and happiness. They have maximum independence, direct their own care, and are fully engaged in the occupation of life. A balanced care system is equally available to, and of equal quality for, all seniors. It has an adequate supply of the right resources, with all types of services readily available.*

Six over-arching strategies run throughout the entire plan. The first relates to ongoing informational campaigns to educate and empower individuals and caregivers. The next follows continuing efforts to develop private-sector initiatives in housing, transportation services, and long term care insurance. Third is the expansion and retention of a qualified long term care workforce. Fourth, the development of a single point of entry system. Fifth, timely data collection and analysis will allow for improved tracking of our overall success. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, a shift from institutional based to home and community based care for our seniors.

The Senior Services Task Force had the input of over 2,000 Nevadans in the creation of the strategic plan, through focus groups, questionnaires, the Internet, response cards. The strategic plan presented by the Task Force is

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representative of that input, and reflective of that desired most by Nevada's seniors and their families. It is also reflective of a potential cost savings to Nevada, as well as increasing the quality of life for our State's seniors. The Las Vegas Sun, in an editorial on October 29, 2002, said the *Long-term care study has merit and the task force's plan for in-home care should be pursued by the governor and the Legislature.*

As the Task Force says in the Strategic Plan, Nevada does have a compelling opportunity for action. And this is the time to take it. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this afternoon.

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