



TO: Jack Robb, Chair, and Public Employee Benefits Program Board

FROM: Douglas Unger, Member, UNLV Employee Benefits Advisory Committee

E-mail: [REDACTED] Ph: [REDACTED]

**PEBP BOARD MEETING – 3-3-2023 – LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - PUBLIC COMMENT**

Doug Unger, Member, UNLV Employee Benefits Advisory Committee. Thank you Chair Robb and the PEBP Board for your consideration.

In Executive Officer Rich’s review of Assembly and Senate Bills, I would like to draw attention of the Board to possible support for two bills: AB 37, from the Nevada Rural Behavioral Health Policy Board, that, if it passes, will establish the Behavioral Health Workforce Development Center under the Nevada System of Higher Education. AB 37 promises to expand numbers of urgently needed mental health providers and access to care in rural Nevada. And SB 146, that, in its section 4, if it passes, will prevent the practice that health insurance networks engage in to deny medical providers in their networks requests to deliver care outside of their networks and more specifically for the UNLV Medical School. One of the goals that faculty and university employees have been pursuing for years is to see a functioning clinical practice plan and provider system established at our Medical Schools similar to those available at, for example, the University of New Mexico, the University of Utah, and other universities. One stumbling block to achieving this goal is a monopolistic lock on provider networks. The argument that SB 146 might increase costs directly contradicts free market principles of competition and only bolsters health provider network monopolies with their risks of predatory pricing and below market provider payments. This current system is also a contributing cause for providers of high demand care—mental health therapists, for example—to reject taking PEBP insurance because a health insurance monopoly on the one hand has reduced their fees to below acceptable levels while on the other hand reserves a right to refuse their requests to deliver care anywhere else. SB 146 is at least one step toward establishing new and much needed competition in the health care market in Nevada. Passage of SB 146 will help create a more rewarding professional environment that will ameliorate provider shortages that plague our state by creating more access for physicians to provide urgently needed care. Thank you.