

# NPA ADVOCACY REPORT

July 2025

## Nevada's 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session Summary

The mission of the Nevada Psychological Association (NPA) is to advance and represent psychology as a science and a profession, as well as to serve the professional needs of its membership and the community. The Nevada Psychological Association is committed to the following core values:

- Diversity, inclusion, and social justice
- Ethical behavior
- Application of knowledge based on scientific methods
- Support, advocacy, and mentorship of psychologists.

These principals guide the Legislative Committee as we advocate on behalf of the association, psychologists, and mental health care in the State of Nevada.

### What is the Legislative Committee and what do we do?

The Legislative Committee (LC) is composed of volunteer psychologists from across the state, members of the Executive Board, and our legislative affairs team Tri-Strategies. Co-chaired by Laurie Drucker, Psy.D. and Michelle McGuire, Psy.D., we began preparing for the legislative session a year in advance, conducted advocacy trainings and held a day long retreat to prepare our team for the work ahead. We received a grant from APA to support our advocacy efforts this year and recruited the largest team of volunteers to the LC ever!

When the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session began on Feb 3, 2025, we had a list of more than 50 BDR's pertaining to psychology, mental health, health care, insurance, professional boards, and DEI issues. Over 1000 pieces of legislation were introduced in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Session. Bills must be introduced, discussed and passed by both houses before being sent to the Governor to approve or veto before they become law. All this work must be completed by "sine die" - midnight on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our advocacy included reviewing hundreds of pages of legislation as BDR's became bills, participating in meetings with stakeholders, monitoring meetings at the legislature, researching issues and writing policy briefs, writing letters and testifying.

We want to acknowledge the dedication of the legislative committee, support of the executive board and guidance from the amazing team at Tri-Strategies - specifically Eddie Abeleser, Spencer Flanders and Ricky Gourrier. Many lawmakers took time to meet with members of NPA, heard us "pitch" our priority bills on Behavioral Health Day, considered our feedback and supported our efforts. We are particularly grateful to Senator Melanie Scheible and Assemblymember Lisa Cole for their support of NPA's two priority bills which were successfully passed and signed by the Governor! Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to NPA's Executive Director Wendi O'Connor for her amazing administrative support and to colleagues at APA who offered advocacy training and legal advice throughout the session.

### Brief Summary of the Legislative Session...

What is a BDR and how does it become a bill?

The 120-day legislative process begins with the submission of a Bill Draft Request (BDR) by a lawmaker, the Governor's office, legislative committees, and many of the Boards and Commissions across the state. Once a BDR is released is little more than a one-line placeholder while the text of the bill is being developed- see this example: Assemblymember Backus (BDR 54-164) Revises provisions governing psychology.

BDR's are then submitted to the Legislative Counsel Bureau where teams of lawyers translate it into a piece of legislation. As an example of this process, here is a link to the actual bill, AB196 that was initially BDR 54-164: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/12166/Text> and a summary of its journey through the Legislature: <https://legiscan.com/NV/bill/AB196/2025>

Of the more than 1000 bills that were introduced 606 bills passed through both houses. The Governor vetoed a record 87 bills and a total of 558 bills became law: (<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Nelis/REL/83rd2025/Bills/Passed/InGovernorsOffice>).

With a divided government this session, Democratic majorities in the Senate and Assembly and a Republican Governor, there was going to be contention about policy. Not unusually the session came down to the final moments and a number of pieces of legislation - some with bipartisan support - did not pass. Additionally, many bills that required significant funding did not pass this session given an initial \$335M deficit in the Governor's proposed budget and uncertainties about Medicaid funding rollbacks. There was clear interest in expanding access to care, growing the healthcare workforce, expanding Medicaid coverage for a range of health services and reforming insurance practices. These issues will continue to dominate the policy landscape as long as Nevada ranks close to the bottom in the nation for access to medical and behavioral healthcare.

## NPA's Priority Legislation...

First, NPA focused on strengthening protections for mental health parity enforcement in the state. Nevada has consistently enacted statewide regulations that follow federal parity rules (MHPAEA) since 2008. As most of us in clinical practice know – despite laws requiring compliance with MHPAEA, parity violations are common and increasing. Beginning early last year, we began gathering data on mental health parity policy and implementation in Nevada. We ran a survey with membership, requested reports and information from the Division of Insurance (mandated in 2021) and learned that insurers did not demonstrate parity compliance and that reporting was inadequate and lacked transparency. We developed language for an amendment to NRS 687B.404 statutes that would require insurers to comply with all federal standards for reporting and for that information to be transparent and accessible to the public. We gained support from several of the Regional Behavioral Health Policy Boards and worked with APA to refine our advocacy approach for the bill. AB207 was introduced by freshman Assemblymember Lisa Cole. Despite some back and forth with the insurance industry they did not oppose the bill - which will go into effect this year.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/12177/Overview>

*In September 2024 the Biden Administration signed a Final Rule to further strengthen enforcement of MH parity laws. In May 2025 the Trump Administration rolled back provisions of MHPAEA to 2013 standards, leaving enforcement of these standards up to the states.*

Secondly, we wanted to amend NRS regulations to allow for psychological interns and postdoctoral students to be "provisionally" licensed so that their clinical services can be reimbursed through insurance. Becoming SB251, sponsored by Senator Melanie Scheible and co-sponsored by Senators Cruz-Crawford, Donate, Nguyen, Orenschall, Pazina and Taylor, this bill passed easily through the Senate and Assembly and was signed into law by the Governor. NPA collaborated with the NBOPE to ensure compliance with existing Medicaid contracts and the procedures for applicants to become provisionally licensed. It is our hope that this bill will support efforts to train and retain psychology students in Nevada, it becomes fully effective in January 2026.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bill/12385/Overview>

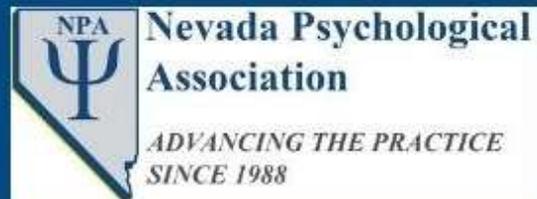


## Scope of Practice...

SB196 was proposed by the NBOPE and sponsored by Senator Backus. Signed by the Governor, this bill allows the services of psychometricians (under the supervision of a psychologist) to administer psychometric testing AND be reimbursed through insurance. Additionally, there will now be a 3-year statute of limitations on filing claims against a psychologist.

SB165 creates a new class of bachelor-level providers called Behavioral Health and Wellness practitioners. These providers will be licensed under BOPE and practice primarily in school and community settings. It is an effort to expand early intervention services to at-risk populations that was put forward by the Children's Advocacy Alliance and sponsored by Senator Nguyen with bipartisan support from Sen. Buck and Sen. Steinbeck. Training programs will be modeled after similar programs in Oregon and Washington. Additionally, this bill creates the first child psychology internship program at UNLV and an advisory group to develop training and licensing programs in the state.

SB 257 addresses the backlog in assessment, diagnosis and early intervention treatment for children with autism. Put forward by the Ackerman Center in Las Vegas and sponsored by Senator Dondero-Loop, the bill was an effort to reduce long wait times for assessment and address insurance denials for lack of a neuropsych evaluation. SB 257 makes changes to the statewide standards for assessment of autism and expands the range of providers who are able to diagnose autism to include any provider under NRS 629.031 - as long as they practice within their scope as defined by their licensing boards. Insurance companies will be required to accept an autism diagnosis (without a neuropsychological evaluation by a psychiatrist or psychologist) to cover intervention services. NPA met with the sponsors of the bill about our concerns that reducing standards and expanding the range of providers who can diagnose autism so broadly sacrificed diagnostic accuracy in the interest of expanding access to services. Ultimately we testified in opposition to this bill to protect consumer safety and the existing systems of care. NPA will continue to advocate with licensing boards to ensure that providers working with the autism community practice within their scope. This bill was signed by the Governor and goes into effect in January 2026.



## Scope of Practice...

**SB275** sponsored by Senator Cannizarro, addresses child custody evaluations and referrals for reunification therapy. NPA became aware of this legislation late in the session and wrote in opposition along with family law attorneys advocating against the legislation as written. Due to widespread misinformation about what reunification therapy is and is not- we are concerned that this legislation will limit the Court's ability to recommend appropriate treatment for children and families involved in contentious custody disputes. The bill was passed and signed by the Governor.

**AB406** sponsored by Assemblymembers Jovan Jackson and Hanadi Nadeem limits the use of AI in providing direct mental health care (providers can use AI for administrative tasks). The bill places additional restrictions around the use of AI in schools and authorizes civil penalties for violations. As a reference point, Illinois is working with AI companies to develop a chatbot that can provide direct mental health services while individuals are on wait lists for care.

## Statewide Systems of Care...

**SB494** created the Nevada Health Authority to oversee state health insurance programs including Medicaid (eliminating oversight of this program from DHHS) as well as other changes to state health insurance coverage - effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**AB163** created a Counselor's Compact, similar to PSYPACT. There were multiple bills seeking to establish health provider compacts this session - only the CPC and PT compact bills passed. Opposition to the other compact bills reflected occupational/union concerns about protecting scope and jobs.

**AB380** sponsored by Assemblymember Edgeworth cleaned up language and removed barriers to deployment of mobile crisis response units.

**AB60** from the Northern Regional BHPB created another classification of early intervention specialists - Certified Prevention Specialists - primarily providing in school services to youth.

**AB467** (forensic evaluation of incarcerated individuals), **SB465** (procedures for involuntary administration of medication to restore competency), **SB17** (expanding diversion programs for substance abuse), **AB550** (long term commitment at Lakes Crossing) - all are bills reforming standards of care for incarcerated/incompetent adults.

**AB167** and **AB467** involved juvenile justice reforms for incarcerated youth.

Failed to Pass:  
**AB339** creating an office of Children's Behavioral Health

**SB47** a study of mental health parity laws, compliance and enforcement with the goal of developing research-backed policy suggestions for the 2027 Legislative Session.

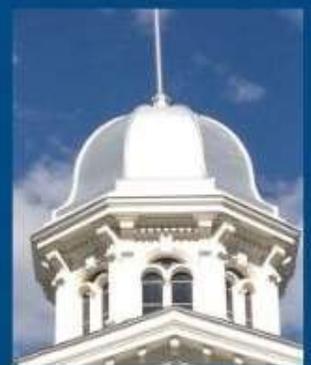
Failed to Pass:  
**SB495** - the Governor's healthcare bill - was introduced late in the session. More than 100 pages long, this bill was a sweeping attempt to address provider shortages, improve access to care, and strengthen delivery systems. It incorporated pieces of legislation popular during the session like streamlining the prior authorization process, expanding GME training, incentivizing practitioners to provide services in rural/underserved areas. The bill would have established an office of Mental Health, within DPBH, and prioritized credentialing and incentives for psychologists and other providers coming to the state. The bill garnered bipartisan support and might have passed but for a last-minute filibuster in the Senate that also blocked passage of the Governor's crime bill and other legislation.

## Professional and Occupational Licensing Board Overhaul...

**SB78** was introduced by the Governor's office of Business and Industry. The bill was an ambitious attempt to overhaul the more than 300 boards and commissions in the state to streamline their operations. Opposition was strong among many professional groups and ultimately the bill failed to progress. NPA wrote in opposition on the part of this bill that sought to create a consolidated Behavioral Health and Wellness board that would include BOPE, MFT/CPC, SW, and LADC licensing boards.

A second bill, **SB425** brought forward by the Interim HHS Committee also sought to create a consolidated behavioral health board. Although the bill was gutted, it reflected an intention to consolidate the behavioral licensing boards under DPBH to streamline administrative functions. **SB78** was modeled after the board in Iowa and **SB425** was modeled after the board in Utah (there are currently only 4 consolidated behavioral health boards including psychology across the nation).

NPA reached out to APA, as well as members of Iowa and Utah psychological associations for feedback about the implementation of consolidated boards in their states. Our opposition was based on the differences in ethical, training and licensing standards between master's level and doctoral level practitioners. NPA raised concerns about the oversight of psychological/neuropsychological testing and forensic evaluations by providers without training in these areas and questioned the impact a consolidated board could have on licensing standards in the state. We believe that attempts to consolidate licensing board operations will be brought forward again in 2027.



## Expanding Insurance Coverage (including Medicaid expansion)

**SB300** increased Medicaid reimbursement for opioid use treatment and services at federally-qualified health care centers.

Failed to pass:

**SB522** mandated health insurance coverage for a range of services that included preventative care for children and coverage for children under their parents plans until age 26, domestic violence screenings, and screening for anxiety and depression in younger children.

**AB340** expansion of insurance coverage for screenings for FASC, ADHD, and LD's

**AB337** expansion of insurance coverage for treatment of dementia

**AB290** and **AB295** improving transparency and expediency of prior authorizations

**SB174** creating standards for services for students with disabilities in schools, authorizing insurance coverage for autism services provided in schools

**SB352** expansion of Medicaid reimbursement in university health clinics (vetoed by Gov)

## Support for Transgender Care...

**SB171** sponsored by Senator Orenschall was a second attempt to create a shield law in Nevada that would protect providers of gender affirming care from sanctions in other states. Although the Senator did an impressive job of responding to the Governor's veto of similar legislation in 2023, the bill was again vetoed. As was **SB141** (Sen. Scheible) to allow persons in the Nevada prison system to be housed with their expressed gender identity, and **SB352** that among other things protected access to insurance coverage for medical care regardless of race, sexual and gender orientation. **AB240** and **SB112** sought to ban trans athletes and failed to get a hearing.

## Psychedelic Assisted Therapies...

**SJR 10** Made a formal recommendation to Congress that psychedelic medicines be "declassified" so that access to their use in treating mental health conditions such as depression and PTSD can be legalized.

**AB378** attempted to create a pilot study to look at use of psychedelic assisted therapy in the state and also did not progress through the legislature. The group behind this bill is well organized and funded on a national level and will continue to advocate for the legalization and integration of these therapies in the state.

For more information and reviews of the session, please see the following links:

### NELIS

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025>

### Division of Insurance

<https://doi.nv.gov/default.aspx>

### MHPAEA Report

[https://doi.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/doi.nv.gov/Content/News\\_and\\_Notices/Report%20to%20Leg%20MHPAEA%20NQL%20Summary%20FINAL%20JULY%202024.pdf](https://doi.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/doi.nv.gov/Content/News_and_Notices/Report%20to%20Leg%20MHPAEA%20NQL%20Summary%20FINAL%20JULY%202024.pdf)

### Nevada Independent Policy Tracker

<https://thenevadaindependent.com/nvleg/2025/policy-tracker>

### Governor Lombardo Health Care Bill

<https://nevadacurrent.com/2025/05/15/lombardos-bill-seeks-to-fix-what-ails-nevada-health-care/>

### Other Bill Summaries:

<https://podtherapy.net/post/78543872931777408/nevada-legislature-2025-mental-health-bill-results>  
<https://legiscan.com/NV>

NPA Legislative Committee Chairs:

Dr. Laura Drucker and Dr. Michelle McGuire



Help NPA make a difference in the mental health care of all Nevadans! Donate to NPA's Political Action Campaign (NPA-PAC) Today!

### Donating is easy....

Donate via our website: [www.NVpsychology.org/donate](http://www.NVpsychology.org/donate)

OR scan the QR code:

