

A Positive Outlook

The UNLV Medical School: Good for the health of our community and our economy



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**APPLIED
ANALYSIS**

About a year from now, the first class of students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Medicine will be on their way toward becoming doctors. That inaugural class of 60 medical students will mark a notable milestone for healthcare in southern Nevada, which for many years has lacked the necessary medical professionals to serve the region's fast-growing population. While efforts in both the private and public sectors have increased the number of doctors in Clark County, our state and region continue to lag the rest of the nation by a wide margin. In fact, southern Nevada has a healthcare economy only 70 percent of the size it should be to serve a community of 2.1 million people.

The negative economic effects of this shortage are well-documented and clearly visible throughout our community. The shortage was also a primary motivation for state and local leaders to develop the UNLV medical school. By providing an additional opportunity for competitive allopathic medical education in Nevada's largest metropolitan area, boosters hope the new institution will be able to attract, train and retain more of the brightest young minds from across the state and throughout the nation. Notably, about seven in 10 doctors remain in the state where they completed their medical education and training, so the vast majority of new doctors attending the UNLV medical school are expected to remain in Nevada, helping to alleviate the state's doctor shortage. The medical school will also serve as an important component of UNLV's pursuit of top-tier status.

In just two short years, the medical school has already achieved a great deal, including securing much-needed funding commitments from the state, as well as significant donations for scholarships and campus construction, recruiting and hiring key faculty and staff positions, and agreeing to build the region's first Academic Health Center in collaboration with University Medical Center of Southern Nevada. Early achievements also include the opening this month of the Ackerman Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment Solutions, a first-of-its-kind center in Nevada that will provide families with autistic children a wide range of specialists for diagnostics, treatment and behavioral support.

These milestones are the first of many that the UNLV medical school will achieve in the years to come, thanks to broad-based support of elected officials, the business community and philanthropists. Moreover, their combined support and investment will generate returns that will not only improve the health of our state and the quality of southern Nevada's flagship university, they will also create tangible economic returns that will ripple throughout the region. By 2025, the medical school is projected to create 5,300 new jobs, a number that will grow to 8,000 by 2030. Meanwhile, total economic impact is projected at \$800 million in 2025, growing to \$1.2 billion by 2030. Importantly, these impacts will be concentrated within the health services sector, a critical need for our community and an important growth industry for diversifying and strengthening our regional economy.

As the UNLV medical school continues to progress toward its inaugural class, I'm thankful for the foresight of our state's leaders and their commitment to the development of such an important institution, one that will improve our community's health, education and economy.

