Annual Report 2024-2025

University of Nevada, Reno - School of Medicine

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

Improving the health and well-being of all Nevadans and their communities through excellence in student education and postgraduate training that produces leaders in medicine; clinical care, safety and innovation; research with local, national and global impact; and an institutional culture of respect and inclusion.

Vision

A Healthy Nevada

Values

- People are our strength.
- We innovate and improve.
- We serve with integrity.
- We succeed with trust and respect.

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Message from Dean Hauptman

I recently had the pleasure of giving a tour of the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, and my guests marveled at the variety of projects, initiatives and scientific explorations happening on campus. As I have come to expect at the end of these tours, my guests shared, "I had no idea." These four little words have become a bit of a drumbeat over the past year, as visitors tour UNR Med for the first time, and as such it has become a project of mine to communicate clearly that, at UNR Med, our accomplishments span undergraduate and graduate programs, graduate medical education (GME), groundbreaking research, and top-ranking programs in Physician Assistant Studies and Speech Pathology and Audiology.

But wait, there's more!

Our biomedical sciences departments conduct translational research with the potential to change lives, such as the recent development of late pre-clinical stage therapeutics for three different forms of muscular dystrophy and novel rapid diagnostics for infectious diseases. Read more about how our researchers are having local, regional and global impact in our feature story on page 16.

This year, the full complement of UNR Med's four residency and five fellowship programs were awarded continued accreditation in addition to a ten-year continued accreditation for the institution. UNR Med has a substantial growth agenda in GME, including a projection of five new programs by 2030, increasing training opportunities for our students and improving retention of physicians in Nevada.

With an emphasis on workforce development and expanding provider access across the state, the Office for Statewide Initiatives provides clinical telehealth opportunities through Project ECHO Nevada, facilitates the Nevada Area Health Education Center (AHEC), and oversees Nevada state loan repayment programs. Recent federal grants, led by Amy McGaha, M.D., chair of family and community medicine, and Gerald Ackerman, M.S., assistant dean of rural programs, are dedicated to the expansion of medical education opportunities in rural areas. The grants support numerous statewide health initiatives, including the development of a rural residency program.

The Sanford Center for Aging provides needed services and interventions for elders in Washoe County and beyond; read more about its programs on page 30. Our student-run Student Outreach Clinic provides high quality care to uninsured and underinsured individuals in Northern Nevada. Over 93% of M.D. students volunteer annually in the clinic's Reno and rural locations.

As the Silver State's first medical school, UNR Med is proud of its history and is committed to a student-centric and patient-centric approach in fulfillment of its educational, research and service missions. I invite you to read and share these stories. They provide insight into the excitement we've generated on our campus, thanks to dynamic leaders, motivated learners and engaged faculty and staff.

With our strong academic health system partner Renown Health, dedicated researchers and community faculty, and an intentional focus on rural outreach, UNR Med is well-positioned to provide the state with medical advances and a physician workforce, allowing us to achieve our vision of A Healthy Nevada.

Go Pack!

Paul J. Hauptman, M.D.

Dean, University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine

Education by the Numbers

Doctor of Medicine

- 295 students enrolled
- 27% first-generation
- 19% rural background
- 59 graduates

Physician Assistant Studies

- 48 students enrolled
- 33% first-generation
- 31% rural background
- 10% military veterans
- 23 graduates

Speech Pathology & Audiology

- 179 students enrolled
- 18% first-generation
- 7% rural background
- 57 graduates
- 21 M.S. and 36 undergraduates

Graduate Medical Education (GME)

- 255,840+ hours of patient care provided to Northern Nevada community by GME trainees
- 39 graduates 30 residents and 9 fellows
- 47% of residents will remain in Nevada to practice
    - 1 of 1 pediatrics resident
    - 7 of 9 family medicine residents
    - 1 of 3 psychiatry residents
    - 5 of 17 internal medicine residents

Physician Assistant Studies and Speech-Language Pathology graduate programs recognized nationally

In 2025, UNR Med's Physician Assistant (PA) Studies program was ranked #21 out of 206 nationwide by U.S. News & World Report, and the Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) program jumped 16 spots to #120 out of 283.

"For a relatively new program, being named among the top in the nation speaks volumes about the people behind it." — Brian Lauf, DMSc, PA-C PA Studies Program Director

The PA Studies program prepares graduates for clinical roles and meets the growing demand for providers in Nevada, especially in rural areas.

The SLP program continues to rise in visibility as the need for speech and hearing specialists grows.

"These rankings reflect our programs' quality and the critical role they play in strengthening Nevada's health care workforce," said Pradyumn Srivastava, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, director of SLP graduate studies.

With both programs earning national recognition, UNR Med continues to demonstrate its growing impact on health care education and its commitment to serving the needs of Nevada communities.

Read the full story on NevadaToday:

https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/us-news-rankings-2025-unr-med

Advancing Autism Research:

Shaping tomorrow's health care professionals

The University Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment (UCAN) at UNR Med is taking a bold step forward in autism research with the addition of a dedicated researcher. This new role — funded by a generous gift from UCAN co-founder Jan Marson, OTD — will analyze nearly two decades of clinical data to improve understanding, diagnosis and early interventions for autism.

"Through UCAN, I've had the privilege of working with so many children and families, and I see firsthand the impact that early diagnosis and intervention can have," Marson said. "By funding this research position, I hope to ensure that we continue to improve and refine the services we offer."

Led by new faculty member Girija Kadlaskar, Ph.D., this research will explore how cognitive abilities, adaptive skills and demographic factors shape language development and access to care for individuals with autism.

UNR Med's Speech Pathology and Audiology programs equip students with the skills needed for impactful careers in diverse environments, from schools and hospitals to rehab centers and community clinics.

"A key challenge in autism care is ensuring that individuals with autism are able to access the services they need following a diagnosis," Kadlaskar explained. "The richness and diversity of UCAN's dataset makes it an exceptional resource for advancing our understanding of these conditions."

In addition to advancing personalized care, UCAN will create new hands-on learning opportunities for students in the Speech Pathology and Audiology program, strengthening UNR Med's commitment to training future professionals and supporting families throughout the state.

"This is about more than research — it's about ensuring that families in our community and beyond have access to the best possible care and support." — Jan Marson, OTD UCAN Co-founder

Read the full story on NevadaToday:

https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/ucan-autism-research

Future doctors and physician assistants advocate at the Nevada State Legislature

During the 2025 Nevada State Legislative session, medical and physician assistant students engaged with lawmakers in Carson City to advocate for expanded Graduate Medical Education (GME) funding, physician assistants' practice authority and improved health care access statewide.

Medical students, including Jacob LaMay, Maureen Scott and Claudia Watkins, testified before the Legislature, emphasizing the urgent need for more residency opportunities to address Nevada's physician shortage. Scott highlighted the state's stagnant residency funding since 1997, calling expansion "critical to improving health care access and addressing disparities.

"When we invest in GME, we invest in a pipeline of physicians who are more likely to stay and practice in our state." — Jacob LaMay M.D. Class of 2026

Watkins underscored the importance of GME funding in light of UNR Med's new OB/GYN residency program launching in 2027. "This funding is essential for adding residency programs and keeping the next generation of physicians here to serve our communities," she said.

This collective advocacy reflects UNR Med's commitment to shaping Nevada's health care future through education, research and expanded clinical training.

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/med-students-nevada-legislature

"I experienced the power of advocacy firsthand and how our collective voices can shape policy. This not only cemented my commitment to becoming a skilled clinician but also to become an advocate for my profession and for Nevada's health." — Adam Serfoss, PA-C PA Studies Class of 2025

The Best Day Ever: Match Day 2025

The M.D. Class of 2025 celebrated receiving their residency program assignments on Match Day, Friday, March 21, 2025. Students, family and friends gathered along with UNR Med faculty, community partners and Renown leadership at the Reno Sparks Convention Center, where they were welcomed with this year's surprise theme: SpongeBob SquarePants!

This year, 11 percent of graduates will remain in Nevada for part of their graduate medical education, including three who matched into UNR Med programs - two in psychiatry and one in family medicine. The most popular specialties among this year's class were anesthesiology (14%) and emergency medicine (12%). Additionally, graduates matched into prestigious institutions such as the Mayo Clinic, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, and Duke University Medical Center.

New Department of Emergency Medicine strengthens training and care statewide

UNR Med, in partnership with Western Emergency Physicians and Renown Health, launched a new Department of Emergency Medicine in January 2025 — a major step to expand education and improve emergency care statewide.

Emergency medicine is growing nationally, with 95.5 percent of residency spots filled in 2024. At UNR Med, 12 percent of the Class of 2025 matched into the specialty, reflecting strong student interest.

Led by interim Chair Bret Frey, '00 M.D., and vice chair David Benaron, M.D., the department includes over 60 board- certified emergency medicine physicians who care for patients at Renown Regional and South Meadows medical centers. They also mentor students, support research and foster hands-on learning.

"The establishment of a new emergency medicine department not only expands educational opportunities for our students, but also lays a strong foundation for advancing medical research and improving patient care for the Northern Nevada community." — Timothy Baker, '04 M.D. Vice Dean

This new department highlights UNR Med's commitment to promoting educational excellence, advancing research, and addressing Nevada's evolving health care needs.

Read full story on NevadaToday:

https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/emergency-medicine-department

When seconds count: Earthquake simulation prepares future health care leaders

In May 2025, the University of Nevada, Reno held a simulated 6.9-magnitude earthquake drill at the Joe Crowley Student Union, bringing together more than 150 students, faculty and regional health partners.

The Interprofessional Care TTX 2025 exercise centered on a mass casualty response to a fictional earthquake scenario grounded in real geological risk along the Mount Rose Fault. Participants from the University's School of Medicine, Orvis School of Nursing, School of Public Health, and Organizational Resilience worked alongside local agencies such as REMSA and Renown Health to practice triage, incident command and coordinated emergency response.

With crises demanding ever-increasing collaboration in health care, this simulation offered a powerful, hands-on experience that prepared students not just to respond — but to lead.

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/interprofessional-care-ttx-2025

"Exercises like this build strong partnerships before a real crisis. It's about people working together when seconds count." — Jennifer Delaney, MPH Organizational Resilience Training Coordinator

UNR Med earns continued ACGME accreditation at program and institutional levels

In 2025, UNR Med achieved a major milestone in graduate medical education (GME). All of the school's ACGME- accredited residency programs (four) and fellowship programs (five) earned continued accreditation, and the institution itself was awarded continued accreditation following its comprehensive ten-year site visit.

Accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) is key to ensuring high- quality training for residents and fellows. At the program level, each residency and fellowship is reviewed annually through data monitoring — such as milestones and surveys — to ensure continued compliance with national standards.

At the institutional level, a more in-depth review occurs every ten years. This high-stakes evaluation assesses how well the sponsoring institution supports its GME programs, from governance and faculty development to the overall learning environment.

"Our ten-year institutional accreditation from the ACGME confirms that UNR Med upholds the highest standards in training physicians, ensuring they are fully prepared for independent practice in their chosen specialties." — David Carlson, M.D., M.Div., DIO Associate Dean

This dual achievement highlights the strength of UNR Med's GME community — program directors, coordinators, institutional leadership and affiliated partners — working together to build and sustain a supportive, high-quality training environment for future physicians across Nevada.

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/acgme-accreditation

UNR Med Residencies & Fellowships:

- Family and Community Medicine ®
    - Sports Medicine (F)
    - Wilderness Medicine (F)
- Internal Medicine ®
    - Geriatric Medicine (F)
    - Hospice and Palliative Medicine (F)
- Pediatrics (R)
- Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences ®
    - Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (F)

(R): Residency (F): Fellowship

Sports medicine fellows train in the rodeo arena

Most sports medicine fellows spend time on the sidelines of football games or in the locker rooms of basketball teams. At UNR Med, trainees are gaining additional clinical experience in an entirely different setting — the professional rodeo arena.

Daniel "Jake" Harrington, M.D., and William "Bo" Cates, D.O., both fellows in the Sports Medicine Fellowship program, have participated in medical coverage at several rodeo events, including the annual Reno Rodeo, as part of their clinical training.

"It's a unique set of athletes in a unique sport," Dr. Cates reflected. "When I was applying to programs, the rodeo coverage was one of the things that made UNR Med stand out. A lot of people don't get that kind of experience."

Both fellows said the experience helped them grow as clinicians and better prepare for a career in sports medicine. "It reinforced how important it is to stay flexible and athlete-centered in our approach," Dr. Harrington said. "It's one of the most valuable parts of the program."

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/sports-medicine-fellows-rodeo

Research with Impact

By: Reilly Moss, ’22, ’23 MBA

At the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine (UNR Med), researchers are advancing the understanding, prevention and treatment of today’s most urgent health challenges. Their work spans clinical, translational and basic sciences, with a focus on a wide range of conditions such as muscular dystrophies, cardiac arrhythmias, gastrointestinal disorders, cancer and infectious diseases.

UNR Med is also home to Nevada’s first cardiovascular research center — the Center for Molecular and Cellular Signal Transduction in the Cardiovascular System. Established through a prestigious $11 million, five-year Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) grant from the National Institutes of Health, the center enables scientists to investigate the cellular and molecular signals that regulate heart function, driving new discoveries in cardiovascular health.

From novel therapies for rare muscular dystrophies to next-generation vaccines, UNR Med faculty and students are addressing critical health threats with global impact. Their expertise not only fuels innovation in the research laboratory but also shapes prevention strategies, informs clinical care and strengthens the future of public health.

Tackling infectious diseases and public health threats

For Subhash Verma, Ph.D., professor of microbiology and immunology (pictured left), understanding how viruses can harm and persist in the human body is both a scientific challenge and a personal passion. “I have always been fascinated by how certain viruses can subvert host pathways to establish chronic infections or even drive the development of cancer,” he said.

His research focuses on oncogenic viruses, such as Kaposi’s Sarcoma-associated herpesvirus (KSHV), which can manipulate the cell’s gene-regulating machinery, leading to uncontrolled cell growth and cancer, particularly in immunocompromised individuals.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Verma’s lab leveraged its deep expertise in virology to respond to the global health crisis, developing biosensors for rapid virus detection and ozone-based viral inactivation systems. “We recognized the need to track SARS-CoV-2 variants and understand how they impact the antibody response to infection, as well as develop strategies to mitigate viral spread,” Verma said.

As the pandemic evolved, he weighed in on emerging public health decisions, including the FDA’s recent move to limit approval of updated COVID-19 vaccines to seniors and people with underlying health conditions. “Although over 100 million Americans are still expected to qualify under these criteria, the decision introduces new barriers for the broader population,” Verma shared with CBS News, noting that delays in booster availability and confusion over eligibility could reduce vaccination rates.

His lab continues to translate molecular virology into real- world solutions, developing technologies and platforms for population-level monitoring, equipping Nevada with the tools to respond to current and future public health challenges.

The work of Paul Brett, Ph.D., and Mary Burtnick, Ph.D., both professors of microbiology and immunology, tackles infectious diseases with a focus on global health. They are leading the charge against melioidosis, a deadly and often overlooked infectious disease caused by the bacterium.

Burkholderia pseudomallei. This bacterium poses a growing threat beyond tropical regions such as Thailand; melioidosis has also recently been detected in Mississippi, marking its emergence in the continental U.S.

This disease is, as Burtnick explained, "often misdiagnosed due to its varied clinical presentation and lack of rapid diagnostics, leading to delayed treatment and high fatality rates." The work of professors Brett and Burtnick aims to change this. They use cutting-edge technologies to discover early diagnostic markers and new vaccine targets, with the goal of developing better ways to detect, prevent and treat melioidosis.

"The complexity of the pathogen and the urgent need for better diagnostics and vaccines drew us to this critical area of research," they said. Beyond advancing scientific knowledge, Brett and Burtnick's work supports national health security and strengthens preparedness for biothreats.

David AuCoin, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, develops rapid, low-cost diagnostic tests to detect infectious diseases around the world, particularly for use in areas with limited resources.

His lab develops these tests using lateral flow immunoassays — similar to home pregnancy or COVID-19 tests. The process begins by identifying the best target antigen from the bacteria, virus or parasite. "Once we determine this, we develop antibodies, which are immune molecules that can bind and detect these targets," AuCoin explained.

Since the pandemic, people have become more comfortable with home-use rapid tests. While tests exist for illnesses like the flu, RSV, strep and COVID-19, many other infections could benefit from faster diagnosis if similar tools were available.

AuCoin is currently developing tests for Lyme disease, viral hepatitis, syphilis and other infectious diseases, in addition to creating a more accurate diagnostic test for Guinea-worm disease — a parasitic infection that can spread from dogs to humans.

Working with global health partners like the Carter Center, AuCoin's goal is to help "move the world one step closer to eradicating diseases that disproportionately affect underserved communities."

Innovating for cancer and chronic disease care

Eric Kim, M.D., associate dean of clinical research at UNR Med and chief of urology at Renown Health, is innovating in the field of prostate cancer diagnosis. He sees an urgent opportunity to improve the way prostate cancer is detected, noting that the limited accuracy of prostate- specific antigen (PSA) screening and the risks associated with biopsy have led to controversy surrounding conventional care pathways.

His NIH funded research, in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team at Washington University in St. Louis, focuses on the development of a promising AI- based "virtual biopsy" tool. This technology, known as Diffusion Basis Spectrum Imaging (DBSI), is designed to work alongside MRI scanning to better identify which patients truly need a biopsy. "Ideally, use of our technology in combination with MRI would eliminate many of the unnecessary prostate biopsies, without missing the patients with clinically significant prostate cancer," he explained.

Dr. Kim is optimistic about the impact this could have, noting, "if DBSI is effective in clinical practice, we would expect that many — as high as 25–30% — of patients who are suspected of having prostate cancer could avoid having a biopsy."

While his work has shown proof-of-concept success, the challenge now lies in bringing the technology into widespread clinical use. "The largest challenge to our research, and medical research in general, is the current funding climate which is limiting our ability to take promising ideas to the next stage of development or use," Kim said.

Dean Burkin, Ph.D., interim chair of the Department of Physiology and Cell Biology, is working to find new treatments for devastating genetic diseases, focusing on Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) and laminin- deficient congenital muscular

dystrophy (LAMA2-CMD). He highlights the urgent need for innovation in this space, noting that these "are complex genetic diseases with no cure or effective therapies."

His interest in genetics and the development of genetic medicine has fueled decades of research, bringing his lab's therapies to the cusp of clinical trials.

"We are working to understand the mechanism of action of these potential therapeutics and their applicability to muscle wasting associated with cancer and cardiovascular disease," he says.

The research of Caroline Cobine, '11 Ph.D., associate professor of physiology and cell biology, delves into the mysteries of gastrointestinal disorders. She notes that while sphincter muscles are crucial for managing the movement of digestive contents, the ways in which these muscles work "remain poorly characterized particularly when compared to other regions in the GI tract, such as the stomach and colon."

Her research focuses on the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) - the muscle between the esophagus and stomach— and its role in conditions like gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) which affects 20-25% of the Western population. Cobine's lab uses advanced tools to investigate how cells, gene expression and signaling pathways regulate normal and abnormal LES function.

"It is important to recognize that drug treatments and other interventions can only be developed by having a thorough understanding of the physiology behind normal function," she says.

Looking ahead, Cobine plans to further investigate how stress affects LES function and increases the likelihood of developing GERD, and how GI function is altered in neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, given that many of these patients experience disturbances such as dysphagia.

Exploring the body's invisible systems

Albert Gonzales, Ph.D., assistant professor of physiology and cell biology, is reframing our understanding of the circulatory system, with a focus on microvascular blood flow in the eye. He is working to redefine capillaries as sensory and regulatory units rather than passive conduits, revealing they can detect and respond to environmental cues such as ultraviolet light. This research has major implications for understanding diseases marked by microvascular dysfunction, including age-related macular degeneration and Alzheimer's disease.

His lab is also exploring how light-regulated blood flow in the choroid of the eye contributes to ocular growth and myopia progression (e.g., nearsightedness), a growing phenomenon that is expected to affect nearly half of the global population by 2050.

"By reimagining capillaries as active players in health and disease," Gonzales said, "our research opens new possibilities for early diagnosis, targeted therapies and precision vascular medicine."

Elizabeth Akin, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmacology (pictured below), is also working at the microscopic level, but her focus is on the heart and the nervous system. "Our lab studies neurocardiology, or the study of how the autonomic nervous system regulates the heart," she said. "We use live-cell microscopy to visualize how neurons and heart cells communicate in real-time."

A commitment to impact

At UNR Med, research spans across disciplines, driving discovery and innovation that improve health in Nevada and beyond. From pioneering biomedical sciences to advancing clinical applications, the school's laboratories are shaping the future of medicine. Explore the groundbreaking research taking place across faculty laboratories by scanning the link below.

Learn more on the UNR Med website: https://med.unr.edu/faculty-and-staff/research-labs

Where science meets care: Launch of the Translational Research Center

At the heart of Nevada's first integrated academic health system, the new Translational Research Center (TRC) is redefining how research can directly serve patients. More than just a facility, the TRC will be a vital bridge — connecting scientists at UNR Med with clinicians and patients at Renown Health.

"The TRC is the next step in the evolution of UNR Med's clinical research enterprise," said Eric Kim, M.D., associate dean. "The affiliation with Renown Health will enable us to leverage the Renown Office of Clinical Research, which has been successfully running many clinical trials."

A cornerstone of the TRC's mission is collaboration. By housing a biobank of patient samples and a repository of de-identified clinical data, the TRC will create new opportunities for discovery in areas like cell biology, biomarker development and drug discovery. This infrastructure is part of a broader vision tied to the affiliation.

"The affiliation of UNR Med and Renown Health means better health care for our community. Academic health systems bring cutting-edge technology in the form of novel diagnostics and treatments to patients." — Eric Kim, M.D. Associate Dean

Beyond technology, the TRC is also a training ground for the next generation of physician-scientists.

"We hope the TRC provides expanded research opportunities for all — physicians, scientists and trainees," Dr. Kim said. "For our UNR Med students, these opportunities will help them contribute meaningfully to their chosen field and, we hope, bring them back to Nevada to serve in an academic environment."

The TRC embodies the promise of an integrated health system: aligning research, education and patient care to build a healthier Nevada — now and for generations to come.

Research by the numbers

$26,038,027

*Total Awards Received in Academic Year 2024-2025

- Psychiatry & Behavioral Science: $1,756,061
- Project ECHO: $236,144
- Physiology & Cell Biology: $3,069,484
- Pharmacology: $2,854,895
- Office of Statewide Initiatives: $2,563,424
- Office of Medical Research: $24,845
- Sanford Center for Aging: $1,258,842
- Speech Pathology & Audiology: $60,283
- Family & Community Medicine: $123,837
- Internal Medicine: $2,579,124
- Microbiology: $4,743,373
- Nevada State Public Health Laboratory: $6,767,715

**Includes research and service grants*

- $32,991,082 — Total Grant Expenditures
- $17,188,712 — Biomedical Sciences Expenditures (Microbiology, Pharmacology, Physiology)
- $6,540,709 — Facilities & Administrative Costs

Seven new R01 awards totaling $17 million granted during Academic Year 2024-25, bringing the total to 18 active RO1s

A Connected Community

Student Outreach Clinic

Bridges gaps in access to health care

Through the dedication of our medical student volunteers, the Student Outreach Clinic (SOC) continues to bring vital care to uninsured and underinsured residents across Northern Nevada. By offering preventive services, diagnostic blood testing, immunizations and compassionate support, the clinic helps bridge critical gaps in access to care, while giving students firsthand experience in serving and learning from our community.

- **Student Outreach Clinic**
  - **Moana Clinic**
    - General/Pediatric
    - Women's Health
    - Dermatology/Geriatric
    - Ophthalmology
  - **Eddy House**
    - Street Medicine
  - **Rural Outreach Clinic**
    - Yerington
    - Silver Springs
    - Fallon

2024 Impact Data

- 93% of M.D. Students have volunteered at least once in a SOC clinic
- 1,359 essential lab orders provided to 457 patients
- 1,326 patient encounters
- 806 Uninsured/underinsured patients cared for in Northern Nevada
- 453 Immunizations provided to 183 patients

New Street Medicine Clinic Brings Vital Care to Reno's Unhoused Population

Launched in 2024 with support from Daniel Spogen, M.D., and Mohammad Saba, M.D., UNR Med's new Street Medicine Clinic brings health care directly to Reno's unhoused population. The clinic, developed in part by students Anisha Makhija and Joseph Tran, is operated by student and physician volunteers.

"We're bringing care to the clients, versus asking them to come to us. Many face barriers accessing traditional health care, so we meet them where they are." — Anisha Makhija M.D. Class of 2028

By partnering with the Eddy House — a nonprofit serving the unhoused and at-risk youth — the team is able to build trust and identify clinic sites. In addition to providing medical care, students also distribute food, water and hygiene products to meet immediate needs and strengthen relationships.

Looking ahead, the team hopes to increase the number of clinic opportunities and add a street medicine rotation to UNR Med's Family and Community Medicine Residency, deepening student and trainee involvement and community impact.

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/street-med-clinic

Statewide Initiatives by the Numbers

- **Project ECHO Nevada 2024**
  - 302 sessions provided to health care and public health professionals
  - 24 topic areas with new programs launched in developmental pediatrics, special education, and school-based mental health
  - 151 cases reviewed
  - 4,412 continuing education hours delivered across all sessions
  - 2,342 professionals attended on average 2.6 times (highest single year in Project ECHO Nevada history)
- **Frontier Area Health Education Centers Scholars Program**
  - 69 participants:
    - 51 medical students
    - 17 nursing students
    - 1 biology undergraduate
- **Rural Nevada EMS Conference 2024**
  - 185 attendees from 11 Nevada counties and 6 states
- **National Rural Health Day 2024**
  - 99 attendees
- **Rural Outreach Clinics* 2024 Stats**
  - 15 clinics
  - 198 patients clinically seen
  - 362 labs ordered
  - 68 vaccines administered

*Locations in Yerington, Silver Springs and Fallon

Learn more about the Office of Statewide Initiatives: https://med.unr.edu/community/office-statewide-initiatives

Training Tomorrow's Physicians in Rural, Underserved Communities

At UNR Med, medical and PA students have the unique opportunity to complete rural clinical rotations at sites across Nevada and eastern California. By working closely with physicians practicing in rural areas, at hospitals and clinics, students not only strengthen their clinical skills but also develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and rewards of practicing medicine in underserved areas. These experiences help to cultivate a strong commitment to rural health, preparing the next generation of physicians to serve where they are needed most.

Sanford Center for Aging supports older adults across Northern Nevada

During Older Americans Month in May 2025, the Sanford Center for Aging celebrated the resilience, wisdom and contributions of older adults, and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting them in living fulfilling and independent lives.

“During these uncertain times, elders are coming to us for help and support and we want to be able to continue to provide necessary services. Our work is possible thanks to support from our community.” — Peter Reed, Ph.D., MPH Director, Sanford Center

Founded with the mission to enhance the quality of life and well-being among elders through education, translational research and community outreach, the Sanford Center has been a steadfast advocate for older adults in the community. Through a diverse array of programs and services, the Center addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by elders, ensuring they receive the support and resources necessary to thrive.

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/sanford-older-month

- **Sanford Center by the Numbers**
  - 5,866 engagements across all programs in 2024-25
- **Community Wellness**
  - 364 participants in free evidence-based wellness programs
  - 27 workshops started in 2025
- **Community Services**
  - 64 transport clients and 42 volunteer drivers
  - 63 senior outreach clients and 77 volunteers in companionship program
- **Sanford Direct Health Services**
  - 213 wellness visits
  - 97 assessments
  - 26 medication reviews
  - 18 participants in healthy heart ambassador blood pressure program
- **Gerontology Academic Program**
  - 36 students enrolled in minor and/or certificate programs
- **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)**
  - 1,584 members
- **Nevada Geriatric Education Center**
  - 2,357 attendees

Nevada State Public Health Laboratory: Building for the Future

The Nevada State Public Health Laboratory (NSPHL) is building for the future with a new, state-of- the-art, 55,000-square-foot facility — scheduled for completion in fall 2026. The building will expand diagnostic and research space, strengthen emergency preparedness and support vital public health programs like newborn screening, disease surveillance and outbreak response.

For more than a century, the NSPHL has protected Nevada's health through innovation, rapid testing and partnerships statewide. The laboratory has been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control for its leadership in pathogen sequencing and bioinformatics, was the first in the nation to identify re-infection with COVID-19, and has sequenced more cases of Candida auris, a serious fungal infection, than any other jurisdiction in the United States.

The new facility ensures the NSPHL remains at the forefront of public health, ready to respond to emerging threats and advance care for all Nevadans.

New Director: Timothy Southern, Ph.D., D(ABMM)

In March 2025, the NSPHL welcomed its new director, Timothy Southern, Ph.D., D(ABMM) — a respected leader in public health, microbiology and laboratory operations. Southern brings decades of experience, including as director of the South Dakota Public Health Laboratory and national service as president of the Association of Public Health Laboratories.

At the NSPHL, he will lead efforts to expand newborn screening, strengthen outbreak response and develop new toxicology testing. With a commitment to science, collaboration and innovation, Southern's leadership will guide the Lab's mission to deliver timely, high-quality diagnostic services and protect the health of communities across Nevada.

Real-time Laboratory Reporting

- 5000+ cases of Candida auris sequenced (more than any other jurisdiction in the U.S.)
- 571,946 tests performed annually

Newborn Screening

- 4,102,249 tests conducted annually to screen for various discrete newborn disorders
- 65,013 newborn samples received in 2024
- 598 newborn disorders identified to date
- 63 treatable conditions screened in 2024

Emergency Response

The NSPHL serves as the state's designated CDC Laboratory Response Network for Biological and Chemical Threats.

Food Safety

The NSPHL serves as Nevada's food surveillance and outbreak testing laboratory, ensuring the safety of food products available to Nevadans.

Philanthropy

Every gift to UNR Med is more than a donation — it's an investment in the health of our state. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we are building Nevada's health care workforce, advancing cutting-edge research, and improving the well-being of individuals and communities across the region. Through philanthropy, our donors help bring our vision of A Healthy Nevada to life, creating lasting impact for generations to come.

- $7,969,543 *Total Giving
- $237,900 Alumni Giving
- $2,371,730 Total Endowment Distributions

*Includes alumni giving and total endowment distributions in Academic Year 2024-25

M.D. Program Scholarship Support 2024-25

Scholarship support allows future physicians to fully engage in the diverse experiences and rigorous training that shape their development, cultivating future generations of health care leaders committed to service and medical advancement.

- $2,192,391 from 98 scholarships
- 21% tuition costs funded by scholarships
- 98% medical students at UNR Med classified as need-based

Empower the next generation of health care leaders!

As federal student loans become limited, your investment is critical for ensuring medical education remains attainable for our future doctors. Please join us to strengthen UNR Med's current scholarships and endowments, or to create your own legacy and drive our vision of A Healthy Nevada.

Thank you for making a meaningful impact!

Donate Today: https://med.unr.edu/get-involved/give-unr-med

New gift expands dual-degree M.D./Ph.D. program, supporting future physician-scientists

A new gift from the Thelma B. and Thomas P. Hart Foundation is opening doors for future physician-scientists through the dual-degree M.D./Ph.D. program at UNR Med. The program gives students the opportunity to earn both a medical degree (M.D.) and a doctorate (Ph.D.) in seven to eight years, preparing them to shape the future of medicine through both research and clinical care.

Students in the program gain a unique perspective by moving between medical training and scientific discovery. They begin with two years in the traditional M.D. curriculum, continue with several years of Ph.D. research, and return to finish the final two years of medical school and clinical rotations. This path equips them to explore the causes of disease, translate discoveries into new therapies, and bring research insights directly to patient care.

“This generous donation creates an exciting opportunity to grow our program and help train the next generation of physician-scientists,” said Caroline Cobine, M.D./Ph.D. program director. “It is inspiring to know that we are equipping these individuals in how to practice medicine while also leading at the forefront of innovative scientific discovery.”

For students, the Hart Foundation’s support makes this ambitious path more accessible. The Foundation’s gift — the program’s first philanthropic contribution — provided scholarships that enabled two new M.D./Ph.D. students to enroll this year. These students are now beginning their journey to becoming physician-scientists, combining scientific curiosity with a commitment to improving health for patients and communities.

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/unr-med-md-phd

International Undergraduate Research Program expands with major gift

UNR Med’s International Undergraduate Research Program (IURP) is reaching new heights, thanks in large part to the unwavering support of Mick Hitchcock, Ph.D., whose significant contribution will play a pivotal role in supporting the program for years to come.

Founded 30 years ago by Sean Ward, Ph.D., professor of physiology and cell biology, the program provides students from Queen’s University Belfast, University of Ulster, and the University of Manchester the opportunity to participate in groundbreaking research at UNR Med.

“Supporting research is important, but what really matters is creating new scientists who will continue to push the boundaries of discovery.” — Mick Hitchcock, Ph.D

The program continues to fuel global collaboration and launch careers, cementing UNR Med’s role in advancing research worldwide. In addition, UNR Med has hosted students in research laboratories from the Institute of Science - Tokyo and Chosun University (Korea).

Read full story on NevadaToday: https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2025/irup-mick-hitchcock-support

Advancing medical education, research and clinical care through our affiliation with Renown Health

As the state's first medical school and the region's first hospital, UNR Med and Renown Health formalized the first and only integrated academic health system in Nevada in 2021.

In the four years since the affiliation agreement was signed, we have developed joint leadership positions, instituted a full complement of clinical chair/chiefs, and continued to expand departments and educational activities for students.

In 2024, Renown Children's Hospital received a Level II Pediatric Trauma Center designation and The Renown Transplant Institute opened in 2025. Advanced Care options at Renown Health also include the only Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) program in Northern Nevada, providing mechanical circulatory support in the setting of acute profound cardiac and/or pulmonary failure.

With a shared commitment to increasing access and providing patient care, advancing clinical research and developing new training and residency programs, UNR Med and Renown Health continue to improve the health and well being of all Nevadans.

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

The Strategic Plan for 2024-2029 was brought to life with the formation of 12 focused working groups, engaging over 100 stakeholders. These groups launched 49 key strategic initiatives, including the establishment of the Translational Research Center, the enhancement of medical students' longitudinal research experiences, and the creation of a State- University Partnership Program with Nevada's Medicaid office. In fiscal year 2025, UNR Med invested a total of $1.092 million to implement strategic planning initiatives.

Learn More at UNR Med: https://med.unr.edu/about/mission-vision-values/strategic-plan

UNR Med Leadership

Administration

- Paul J. Hauptman, M.D. Dean
- Timothy Baker, ‘04 M.D. Vice Dean
- Philip Clark, DHA, MBA Senior Associate Dean, Administration and Finance
- Alicia Diaz-Thomas, M.D., MPH Senior Associate Dean, Institutional and Faculty Affairs
- Neda Etezadi-Amoli, ‘02 M.D. Senior Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
- Lucia Notterpek, Ph.D. Senior Associate Dean, Research
- David Carlson, M.D., M.Div., DIO Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education
- David Howard, ‘04 M.D., ‘98 Ph.D. Associate Dean, Curricular Affair
- Nicole Jacobs, Ph.D. Associate Dean, Inclusive Excellence
- Eric Kim, M.D. *Associate Dean, Clinical Research
- Barbara Kohlenberg, Ph.D. *Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs
- John Packham, Ph.D. Associate Dean, Statewide Initiatives
- William “Bill” Plauth, M.D. Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs
- Lauren Schwarz, Ph.D. *Associate Dean, Student Affairs Associate Dean, Institutional Wellness
- Gerald Ackerman, M.S. Assistant Dean, Rural Programs
- Shannon Beets, M.A. Assistant Dean, Institutional Assessment and Accreditation
- Aaron Dieringer, ‘15 M.D., MPH Assistant Dean, Admissions
- Katelyn Hatfield, Ph.D. *Assistant Dean, Curricular Affairs
- Farah Madhani-Lovely, M.D., MPH, MBA Assistant Dean, Clinical Research
- John Westhoff, M.D., MPH Assistant Dean, Student Research

Chairs & Center Directors

- James Alexander, M.D. Chair, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- David AuCoin, Ph.D. Chair, Microbiology and Immunology
- Tami Brancamp, Ph.D., CCC-SLP *Chair, Speech Pathology and Audiology
- Dean Burkin, Ph.D. *Chair, Physiology and Cell Biology
- Takesha Cooper, M.D., M.S. Chair, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Kristina Deeter, M.D., MBA Chair, Pediatrics
- Christie Elliott, M.D. *Chair, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
- Bret Frey, ‘00 M.D. *Chair, Emergency Medicine
- Myron Gomez, M.D. Co-Chair, Surgery
- Robert Harvey, Ph.D. Chair, Pharmacology
- Janet Hobbs, MBA, MLIS, Ed.D. Director, Savitt Medical Library
- Cheryl Hug-English, M.D., MPH Medical Director, Student Health Center
- Brian Lauf, DMSc, PA-C Director, Physician Assistant Studies Program
- Samuel A. Lee, M.D., Ph.D. Chair, Medicine
- Amy McGaha, M.D., MPH Chair, Family and Community Medicine
- Lori Rawson, M.D. Co-Chair, Surgery
- Peter Reed, Ph.D., MPH Director, Sanford Center for Aging
- Timothy Southern, Ph.D. Director, Nevada State Public Health Laboratory

*Interim

University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine 2025 Annual Report

Lead, Dana Reynolds

Graphic Design, Reilly Moss, ‘22, ‘23 MBA

Photography, Brin Reynolds ‘12, ‘15 MBA

Student Writer, Julia Johnson