

Cash coming to help Nevada's mental health system

By Andrew Doughman, Las Vegas Sun

The legislative Interim Finance Committee approved \$2.1 million in emergency mental health funding on Tuesday after spending hours criticizing Nevada's inadequate treatment of mentally ill residents and visitors.

Legislators said the state of Nevada's mental health system appears to have reached crisis levels. Failures in the system, they said, have led to overcrowding in emergency rooms, backlogs and delays in jails, loss of accreditation for one major state hospital, difficulties in recruiting quality staff because of pay that's not competitive, and inefficient, expensive practices of moving mentally-ill inmates between Southern and Northern Nevada.

The \$2.1 million would allow the state to renovate and reopen a state facility in Southern Nevada, hire more staff, pay for a mental health "drop-in" center and provide for more patient beds.

Gov. Brian Sandoval's chief of staff called the funding "urgent" in the wake of a dramatic spike in the numbers of mental health patients flooding Southern Nevada's emergency rooms and a crisis at Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital in Las Vegas.

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