

Lack of pediatric care forces families to leave Nev.

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

Nate Christy's medical journey started in Reno with a routine appendectomy on Jan. 13.

What has followed for Nate, 9, were six more surgeries, having to be revived seven times when his heart stopped and three blood transfusions.

And now recovery involves a road out of town.

Nate and many other children in Nevada leave the state in search of better care, specialists, second opinions and established medical communities with teams of doctors that collaborate.

Some leave for things that are considered a given in cities the sizes of Reno and Las Vegas, including to see dermatologists, rehabilitation and treatment for adolescent arthritis. Some leave looking for second opinions and answers.

"Children in our state are at a high risk because there aren't enough pediatricians and specialists," said Barbara Atkinson, planning dean of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Medical School.

Creating a better Nevada system of public medical education is the top priority of the Nevada Board of Regents, the governing body over the state's public colleges.

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