**NEVADA GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

**DRAFT Position on Sexuality and Sexual Health**

Historically, people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) have been thought to be asexual without needing to have loving and fulfilling relationships with others. Their rights to sexuality, which is essential to human health and well-being, have been denied and this has negatively affected people with I/DD in gender identity, friendships, self-esteem, body image and awareness, emotional growth, and social behavior. People with I/DD historically lack access to appropriate sexuality education which may cause them to engage in inappropriate sexual activity because of manipulation, loneliness, or physical force instead of an expression of their sexuality. Lack of accurate information being provided on sexuality and sexual health is a key factor in higher rates of abuse for people with I/DD.

# **The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) believes that every person has the right to exercise choices regarding relationships and sexual expression regardless of the presence of I/DD or severity of their diagnosis and does not justify loss of rights related to sexuality, sexuality education, and sexual health.**

# **The NGCDD supports the position of the World Health Organization on sexual rights of people living with a disability. These include the right to:**

# **be recognized as having a sexual nature just like anyone else.**

# **explore and express their gender and sexuality.**

# **have relationships based on consent, respect and safety.**

# **choose when, whether or not to have sexual experiences.**

# **learn lessons from life’s experience, with support and skill development where required.**

# **control decisions which affect their sexual and reproductive health and relationships as much as possible.**

**Policy Recommendations:**

1. School districts, medical personnel, and other trusted members of I/DD community shall promote sharing of accurate information about sexuality, sexual health, etc. to people with I/DD, their family members, service providers, and those outside of the I/DD community in order to promote safe and consensual sexual health.
2. Implement policies that promote providing information on options, rights, and services available to people with I/DD in order to ensure safe and consensual sexual health.
3. Implement policies that are welcoming and inclusive of all sexualities and relationship styles.
4. Implement policies that promote the empowerment of people living with a disability to participate as fully as they are able in pursuit of their own sexual and reproductive health and in achieving a healthy relationship with both their own sexuality and with other people.

Last Review Date: