



Help map Christmas light displays around Reno-Sparks

NEWS, 5A

weekend

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Unlawful businesses



An undercover Reno police officer from the Human Exploitation and Trafficking team stands outside Reno's police headquarters on Oct. 28. PROVIDED BY RPD

How Reno police fight sex trafficking at illegal massage parlors

Mark Robison
Reno Gazette Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Next door to Reno nail salons, convenience stores and restaurants, women are being trafficked in illegal brothels masquerading as massage parlors.

They are called IMB's in police lingo, for illicit massage businesses.

"Massage parlors have been an issue for quite some time," said Christopher Johnson, Reno Police Department public information officer.

It's a growing problem made more challenging because of language barriers, the way the businesses are organized and their popularity among certain men in Northern Nevada.

A regional anti-trafficking law enforcement team estimates there are about 20 IMB's in Reno and 10 to 20 in the surrounding area.



Lotus on Moana Lane sits empty inside after closing in September 2025 due to operations by the regional Human Exploitation and Trafficking team.

MARK ROBISON/RGJ

"That's a number we've established based on a lot of different things — intelligence gathering," said Johnson, who used to be on the regional Human Exploitation and Trafficking team.

The problem is so big in Reno, officers say, because it's big everywhere. There are about 15,000 IMB's in the U.S. alone, and that's growing at a rate of about 10% year over year,

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Trump administration change could worsen nursing shortage

Mark Robison
Reno Gazette Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Trump administration change in how the word "professional" is defined could worsen Nevada's already significant nursing shortage.

"There's the potential that this will impact between 25% to 35% of graduate nurses here at UNR who are financing their education in part with federal student loans," said Charles Yingling, dean of the Orvis School of Nursing at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The U.S. Department of Education recently reverted to the definition of "professional" as used in a 60-year-old law.

The 1965 Higher Education Act lists 10 jobs that qualify as professional degrees. Along with medicine and law, these include pharmacy, veterinary medicine, chiropractic and theology — but not nursing.

The job of nurse practitioner hadn't been created yet.

"So rather than embracing a more contemporary view of health care and professional practice, they embraced a very restrictive view as it was defined in 1965," Yingling said of a Department of Education committee that is on the verge of adopting the older definition.

The issue is tied in with President Donald Trump's so-called One Big Beautiful Bill, which puts caps on student loans not involving professional degrees.

If the Department of Education committee formalizes the redefinition of "professional," then many nurses who get advanced degrees to become nurse practitioners or to teach nursing will be unable to get enough in student loans to cover their educations.

The loan cap for advanced nursing degrees would drop from \$200,000 total to \$65,000.

"The charitable part of me wants to believe this is an oversight by people who didn't realize that nurse practitioners provide more than 1 billion health care encounters per year in this country," Yingling said.

"It's hard to believe that educated, well-intentioned policymakers would make such a glaring oversight."

In a Nov. 24 news release, the U.S. Department of Education defended the



Yingling

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Gallup report: See where Nevada ranks in best-worst states to get sick

Mark Robison
Reno Gazette Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Nevada ranks 50th out of 51 among all states and the District of Columbia for its residents' health care experiences.

The finding is based on a survey of nearly 20,000 Americans nationwide. It's part of research stemming from a partnership between the polling outfit

Gallup and the West Health nonprofit that focuses on health care affordability and aging.

Overall, the report had two record highs since the research project started in 2021:

- 47% of U.S. adults worry they won't be able to afford necessary health care in the coming year;
- 20% report they or someone in their household couldn't pay for prescription medications in the previous

three months.

At the bottom of the rankings for best and worst states to get sick in, Nevada was sandwiched between New Mexico at 49th and Alaska at 51st.

The top states were Iowa at No. 1, followed by Massachusetts and the District of Columbia.

"Residents in the 10 top-ranked states are less likely than those in the 10

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