

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

District Releases Number of Illness Reports Associated with Norovirus Cluster

(Las Vegas, Nev., - November 4, 2004) – After completing its initial investigation, the health district Office of Epidemiology has released a preliminary number of illness reports associated with the norovirus cluster at the Flamingo Las Vegas. The Office of Epidemiology derives its composite number from several sources: direct reports to Flamingo Las Vegas, direct reports to the health district and reports from medical facilities. As a result, the health district illness number is larger than the number previously released by the Flamingo Las Vegas, which was compiled solely from reports to on-site security staff.

A total of 1,252 employees and guests of the Flamingo Las Vegas reported symptoms of vomiting and/or diarrhea with an onset date between mid October and early November. The following chart illustrates the breakdown of illness reports:

Health District	Flamingo	Duplicate	Total
887	458	93	1,252

These numbers are expected to change, based on further investigation.

A large number of these people were ill during the third week of October. A steady decrease had been noted in the number of guests and employees reporting becoming ill in the following weeks. The illness cluster was originally reported to the health district by Flamingo Las Vegas staff on October 20, 2004.

“Health district and Flamingo Las Vegas staff are continuing to work together to mitigate the outbreak,” said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer. “Heightened sanitation practices have been implemented and staff is working to quickly identify any ill employees, so they may be excused from work until well,” said Kwalick.

(more)

Noroviruses are a common group of viruses that affect the gastrointestinal tract, causing vomiting, diarrhea, nausea and abdominal cramps. Although this type of illness is frequently called the “stomach flu,” its symptoms differ from those caused by influenza (flu) and are not considered to be flu-like. Noroviruses are highly contagious and easily spread from person to person through direct contact with an ill person or a surface contaminated by the virus. The best defense against illness is proper handwashing – especially after using the restroom and before eating.

Additional information on noroviruses is available at the health district website at <http://www.cchd.org/>. Guests or visitors of the Flamingo Las Vegas wishing to report illness may contact the Clark County Health District Office of Epidemiology (702) 759-1296.

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