



**DATE:** February 23, 2023

**TO:** Southern Nevada District Board of Health Members

**FROM:** Fermin Leguen, MD, MPH, District Health Officer *FL*

**SUBJECT:** District Health Officer Report

---

### **COVID-19 Update**

The federal government announced plans to end the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has underscored it remains dedicated to preventing severe illness and death from COVID-19, particularly in population who are at higher risk for adverse outcomes.

As COVID-19 continues to circulate in the community, the Southern Nevada Health District's related services will continue, including vaccinations, testing, surveillance, treatment, information, resources, and more. As of Monday, February 13, there have been 598,784 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in Clark County and 9,301 people have died.

### **Norovirus Outbreak**

In January, the Southern Nevada began investigating a report of an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness at Wayne Tanaka Elementary School. On February 9, the agency reported a total of 71 confirmed and probably cases of norovirus associated with this outbreak. Two cases were confirmed through laboratory testing, and 69 cases identified through interviews met the criteria to be considered a probable case.

As a part of its outbreak response, the Health District provided information and prevention information in conjunction with Clark County School District and to the public. Norovirus is very contagious and spreads from person to person. Norovirus outbreaks can frequently occur in settings such as school campuses and it is often difficult to determine the origin of the illness. The Health District continues to recommend preventive measures to mitigate the spread of this virus. The best way individuals can protect themselves and others from norovirus is by washing their hands thoroughly with soap and running water. Practicing proper hand hygiene is especially important after using the toilet, changing a diaper, and before eating, drinking, preparing or handling food. More prevention tips are available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at [www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/prevention.html).

Norovirus can spread through direct contact with an infected person, by consuming food or water that has been contaminated, or by people touching contaminated surfaces and then putting their unwashed hands in their mouths

People who are exposed to norovirus will usually develop symptoms within 12 to 48 hours after exposure. Most people will recover within one to three days. Common symptoms are diarrhea, vomiting, nausea and stomach pain. Symptoms can also include fever, headache and body aches.

More information about norovirus is available at [www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/Health-Topics/norovirus/](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/Health-Topics/norovirus/).

### **Community Health Improvement Plan**

The Health District announced the release of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to the public on January 30. The release marked the conclusion of a comprehensive process that started in October 2021 to address public health priorities in Clark County for the next three to five years.

The CHIP is a community-wide strategic planning effort that is aimed at making an impact on the health of the community. It is a collaboration between government agencies, health care providers, non-profit organizations and academia. The CHIP addresses the public health priorities in four key areas: chronic disease, access to care, funding and transportation:

- **Chronic Disease:** Chronic disease is a condition that lasts longer than a year or more and requires ongoing medical attention, limited activities of daily living or both. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S. and one in six adults in the nation have a chronic disease.
  - The CHIP identifies smoking, and tobacco use in general, as an important factor in multiple chronic diseases. Tobacco control efforts are seen as a key mechanism for reducing the burden of chronic disease in Southern Nevada. In 2021, 15.5% of adults in Nevada used tobacco, while the national average is 14.4% according to the 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS). In Clark County, the rate of smoking among adults was 14.88% (BRFSS, 2021).
  - From 2018-2020, the heart disease mortality rate was 386 per 100,000 population in Clark County, and 319.5 per 100,000 in the United States (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, 2018-2020, ages 35+).
- **Access to Care:** A person's health should not depend on their ZIP code, economic status, religion or sexual orientation. From 2014-2018, the average rate of Clark County individuals lacking health insurance was 12.5%, while the national average was 9.4% (American Community Survey, 2014-2018). Having adequate access to care helps address disparities and is the first step in creating a more equitable health system for everyone.
- **Transportation:** Reliable access to transportation can help increase employment rates while improving access to health care providers and healthy foods. It can also expand access to parks and recreation for a healthy lifestyle. From 2016-2020, the percentage of workers commuting by public transportation in Clark County was 3%, while the national average was 4.6%. (American Community Survey, 2016-2020).
- **Funding:** Just 3% of health care dollars in the U.S. are spent on preventing disease and 75% of health care costs are related to preventable conditions. In 2021, Nevada's overall public

health funding was \$72 per person; meanwhile, the national average was \$116 per person (America's Health Rankings, 2021). Increasing public health funding can improve employment rates, address high health care and transportation costs, increase limited public resources and improve educational opportunities.

District Health Officer Dr. Fermin Leguen commented on the CHIP and the value it provides to public health planning for the community, saying it provides clear, specific and action-oriented goals. "The CHIP is based on solid, evidence-based strategies. It presents realistic timelines for improving public health in Southern Nevada."

The CHIP can be viewed on the Healthy Southern Nevada website at [www.healthysouthernnevada.org](http://www.healthysouthernnevada.org). To learn more about the CHIP or to get involved, contact [HealthyConnect@SNHD.org](mailto:HealthyConnect@SNHD.org).

### **American Heart Month**

In observance of American Heart Month, the Southern Nevada Health District and its partners are spotlighting the free programs and classes they offer to help people manage hypertension and other heart disease risk factors. Health care providers are encouraged to share these resources with their patients during the month of February and throughout the year.

A key example is the Healthy Hearts Ambassador Program, which helps people with hypertension develop a blood pressure self-monitoring routine. Offered in partnership with YMCA of Southern Nevada, this program also offers nutrition education and tips to maintain cardiovascular health. Classes are free and were held during February at the Bill and Lillie Heinrich YMCA (4141 Meadows Ln., Las Vegas 89107) and Durango YMCA (3521 N. Durango Dr., Las Vegas 89129). The program is available in English and Spanish.

Eating right is also essential to a heart-healthy lifestyle. In partnership with the 100 Black Men of Las Vegas, the Health District sponsored a free cooking class for young people, ages 7-18, to learn about healthy cooking. Guest Chef Jeff Henderson hosted the virtual Youth Cooking Class on February 21, from 6 - 8 p.m.

Blood pressure checks are vitally important because high blood pressure typically has no symptoms and thus cannot be detected without being measured. Free blood pressure checks, administered by the Health District were available throughout February at barbershops throughout the community.

Additionally, in partnership with the Barbershop Health Outreach Project, SNHD has installed permanent, self-administered blood pressure monitoring stations at the following businesses:

- Executive Cuts, 921 W. Owens Ave., Las Vegas 89106
- Blade Masters Barbershop, 2245 N. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas 89108

Customers and non-customers alike are invited to stop by and get a free blood pressure check as well as educational materials at these locations. Hours are 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

For more information, including dates and locations of future blood pressure screenings, visit [www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org](http://www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org).

## **Influenza Surveillance**

In Clark County, for the season as of February 4, 2023, there have been 718 influenza-associated hospitalizations and 43 influenza-associated deaths reported. The percentage of emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for influenza-like-illness (ILI) decreased from 3.6% in week 4 to 3.4% in week 5. Approximately 49% of area emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for ILI were made by children 0-17 years of age, which was similar to week 4 (49%). Influenza A has been the dominant type circulating. Nationwide, during week 5, seasonal influenza activity is low. Among the 55 states/jurisdictions, the ILI activity level in Nevada remains minimal. The Health District will continue to update the public on flu activity and encourage flu vaccinations for everyone 6 months of age and older. Flu vaccines are available at [SNHD clinics](#) as well as doctors' offices and pharmacies throughout Clark County.

## **Community Meetings**

### **Week ending 01/29:**

#### Monthly:

- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meeting with Councilwoman Brune, Councilman Knudsen, Councilman Black, Mayor Romero, Scott Nielson, Bobbette Bond, Mayor Hardy, Councilwoman Gallo
- Participated in the Southern Nevada District Board of Health meeting
- Participated in the Second Monthly Big Cities Health Coalition (BCBH) Call regarding Expansion of the
- Location Services data work presented by CDC/USDS PRIME

#### Annual:

- Participated in the District Health Officer Annual Review Committee meeting

#### Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the "Updates to COVID-19 Testing and Treatment for the Current SARS-CoV-2 Variants" webinar facilitated by Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA)
- Attended the "Women's Preventive Services Initiative (WPSI)" webinar facilitated by the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA), Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, in collaboration with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

#### Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Participated in the Finance Committee meeting
- Participated in a meeting regarding EpiTrax with state representatives
- Participated in a meeting with Prism HR Consulting regarding the Director of Human Resources recruitment

### **Week ending 01/22:**

#### Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

- Attended the Mpox Briefing facilitated by the HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA)

Monthly:

- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center (SNCHC) Governing Board meeting
- Participated in the Clark County Medical Society Board of Trustees meeting

Quarterly:

- Participated in the State Board of Health meeting

Annual:

- Participated in the Nevada Primary Care Association (NVPCA) Board Retreat

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the "Research Seminar Series: Critical Appraisal/Risk of Bias Assessment in Evidence-Based Research" webinar facilitated by the Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine at UNLV

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Participated in the ACGME Sponsoring Institutional Site Visit
- Participated in an introductory meeting with State Treasurer Zach Conine
- Attended the Governor's Southern Nevada Inaugural Ball

**Week ending 01/15:**

Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

- Attended the Mpox Briefing facilitated by the HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA)

Monthly:

- Participated in the Monthly County Health Officers meeting

Quarterly:

- Participated in the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) meeting
- Nevada Primary Care Association (NVPCA) Finance Committee meeting

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the "Latest Update on Urgent Virus Outbreaks: COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus, and Influenza" webinar
- Attended the "CMA – Virtual Grand Rounds: COVID, RSV and Flu – Updates on Triplememic" webinar facilitated by the California Medical Association
- Attended the CityHealth 2022 Annual Release" webinar
- Attended the "Restream: Navigating Florida's Medical Landscape" webinar facilitated by the Florida Medical Association

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Participated in a meeting with CDC regarding NAMCS Facility Interview Update
- Participated in a meeting with Commissioner Kirkpatrick regarding the State funds for 27% EH fees
- Participated in a meeting with Bradley Mayer regarding the legislative session
- Participated in a meeting with Senator Fabian Donate regarding the legislative session

**Week ending 01/08:**

Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

- Attended the Mpox Briefing facilitated by the HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA)

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Participated in an introductory meeting with T'Quondra L. Harris, CDC Project Officer, regarding the PHI Grant