



DATE: March 23, 2023

TO: Southern Nevada District Board of Health Members

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

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

Legionnaires' Disease Outbreak Investigation

On March 3, the Southern Nevada Health District announced it was investigating two cases of Legionnaires' disease reported in guests who stayed separately at The Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nev., in December 2022 and January 2023. The hotel is assisting in the investigation and began taking steps to notify current and past guests dating back to December 16, 2022. The Health District posted the survey on its website, and guests who stayed at The Orleans during this timeframe and experienced symptoms up to 14 days after their stay can report their illness using this link: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7242768/23-008>.

In response to the initial illness reports, the Health District conducted an environmental study of the facility, including water sampling, and the facility arranged for additional environmental testing of its water system which indicated the presence of *Legionella* bacteria. To help prevent additional people from becoming sick, the hotel began implementing remediation procedures. Throughout the remediation process, the Health District will monitor additional water sampling of the hotel's water system to determine if *Legionella* are present and to ensure the disinfection efforts are effective.

The Health District has also activated its helpline, and anyone with additional questions can call (702) 759-4636 (INFO) or 1-866-767-5038, Sunday through Saturday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. PST. More information on Legionnaire's disease is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html.

Legionnaires' disease is a type of pneumonia caused by the *Legionella* bacteria. It is contracted by inhaling aerosol droplets of water contaminated with the bacteria. Sources of the aerosol can include showers, hot tubs, faucets, cooling towers, misters, and decorative fountains. Most healthy people exposed to *Legionella* do not get sick; however, the illness can be severe and sometimes result in death. Generally, Legionnaires' disease does not spread from person to person.

Symptoms will usually begin within two to 10 days after exposure to the bacteria. However, people should watch for symptoms for about two weeks after exposure. The Health District has advised guests who stayed at The Orleans Hotel & Casino more than two weeks ago and have not developed symptoms are not at risk for disease. If guests of the property develop symptoms within 14 days of their stay, they should seek medical attention immediately and inform their health care provider of their potential exposure to Legionella. Legionnaires' disease symptoms are very similar to other types of pneumonia

and can include cough, shortness of breath, high fever, muscle aches, and headaches. Legionnaires' disease is treated with antibiotics.

There are factors that can put people at an increased risk of getting sick: being age 50 years or older; being a current or former smoker; having a chronic lung disease (like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or emphysema); having a weakened immune system or taking drugs that weaken the immune system (like after a transplant operation or chemotherapy); having cancer, diabetes or kidney failure; or other underlying illness.

More information on Legionnaire's disease is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html.

World TB Day

The Health District is commemorating World TB Day, observed annually on March 24, to draw attention to the ongoing epidemic and highlight the need to detect and treat those with TB. It is a reminder that too many people still unnecessarily suffer from the disease.

Tuberculosis continues to be a significant global health threat. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2021, across the globe, 1.6 million people died of TB and another 10.6 million become ill with it. While global efforts to combat TB have saved an estimated 74 million lives, the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors have reversed years of progress.

In 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reported 7,882 TB cases in the United States. That same year, the Health District reported 54 TB cases in Clark County.

TB is caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which can be spread through the air when infected individuals cough or speak. The bacteria usually attack the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the brain, spine and kidney.

Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. In fact, most people will develop latent TB infection (LTBI), a condition in which the bacteria can live in the body without ever making a person sick. However, in other people, especially those with weak immune systems, the bacteria can cause active TB disease, which can be deadly if not identified and treated appropriately.

As the leading provider of TB services in Southern Nevada, the Health District's [Tuberculosis Treatment and Control Clinic](#) offers comprehensive care to ensure that people with active TB disease or LTBI are treated and that those exposed to someone with active TB disease are properly evaluated.

More information about World TB Day is available at www.stoptb.org/advocate-to-enttb/world-tb-day.

County Health Rankings

The Southern Nevada Health District will host a briefing of the Southern Nevada County Health Rankings on March 29, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at its main public health center at 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, in its Red Rock Conference Room. The County Health Rankings are released each year by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The County Health Rankings measure the health of nearly all counties in the nation and rank them within states. The rankings are compiled using county-level measures from a variety of national and state data

sources. The Rankings serve as a call to action by allowing communities to better understand the health issues in their respective counties and by mobilizing stakeholders to improve the health of their communities. Participants can register to attend [here](#).

COVID-19 Update

As a result of the plans by the federal government to end the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023, there will be less required laboratory reporting. This change will primarily affect the reporting of negative test results which would impact the percent positivity metric. Additional impacts are being discussed and federal, state and local public health agencies remain dedicated to preventing severe illness and death from COVID-19.

The Health District is reviewing its own reporting and surveillance activities to ensure they continue to keep the public informed while providing data that are accurate and appropriate based on the resources and information that are available.

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

The Health District and its partners commemorated National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Friday, March 10. It was a day to support women and girls who are living with HIV and to encourage others to be tested for HIV. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), women accounted for 19 percent (6,999) of the 36,801 new HIV diagnoses in the United States and dependent areas in 2019. Women ages 25 to 34 had the highest number of new HIV diagnoses, and Black/African American women continued to be disproportionately impacted by HIV.

In observance of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) offered activities at The Center to raise awareness and provide resources:

- “It’s Tea Time” provided education and resources about women and HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). The program also provided updated guidelines on breastfeeding as well as discussed sex work vs. human trafficking.
- “A Celebration of Words and Song,” honored women and girls, and was presented by 3:16 Degrees of Soul. The concert featured acclaimed poet Vogue Robinson and award-winning poet and vocalist Brittany Soul, with a special presentation by Ciara Owens.

Testing is an opportunity for women and girls to learn their HIV status so they can take steps to protect their health as well as help prevent infection to others. Routine testing is recommended for women who are at a high risk of infection. The Health District provides free HIV testing at the Arleen Cooper Clinic at The Center, Monday through Thursday from 1 – 6 p.m. and on Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Appointments are preferred, but walk-ins are accepted.

Additionally, Express HIV Testing is available Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Sexual Health Clinic, 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107. Appointments are not required, but clients must be asymptomatic. Additional testing can be done for syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia. Visit the [Sexual Health Clinic](#) page on SNHD’s website for more information.

SNHD also offers free, at-home HIV, chlamydia and gonorrhea testing through its Collect2Protect program. The kits are available on SNHD’S [Collect2Protect](#) page and provide a convenient and private testing option.

Early diagnosis is critical for people with HIV so that they can benefit from antiretroviral therapy (ART). ART reduces HIV levels in the bloodstream, reduces HIV-related illnesses, and lowers the risk of transmitting HIV to intimate partners. With ART, HIV-positive people can remain healthy for many years.

According to the CDC, only 10 percent of women who could benefit from PrEP were prescribed the medication in 2019. PrEP is a medication that can be provided to people who do not have HIV but are at a high risk of infection. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV. For more information about women and PrEP, visit the CDC's [Let's Stop HIV Together](#) webpage.

National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month, and the Health District is urging residents to learn how to make informed food choices and develop healthy eating habits. This year's campaign encourages consumers to "fuel for the future" when planning meals and snacks.

The Health District recognizes it can often be difficult for people to meet nutrition guidelines. Some people may need help to ensure they are getting proper nutrition, and there are community resources and government programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children and local food banks such as [Three Square](#) that offer support and assistance. This school year, the Clark County School District (CCSD) offers free school meals to all students in CCSD, including breakfast and lunch options.

Health District programs that enhance available resources are available on the agency's [Get Healthy Clark County](#) website which offers a wealth of resources about nutrition. This includes the [Nutrition Challenge](#), a free eight-week online program to help people increase the number of fruits and vegetables they eat each day. The site also features the [SNAP Cooking App](#) and a listing of [farmers markets that accept SNAP](#). A Spanish version of the site is available at [Viva Saludable](#).

Influenza Surveillance

In Clark County, for the season as of March 4, 2023, there have been 757 influenza-associated hospitalizations and 45 influenza-associated deaths reported. The percentage of emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for influenza-like-illness (ILI) increased slightly from 3.6% in week 8 to 3.7% in week 9. Approximately 54% of area emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for ILI were made by children 0-17 years of age, which was higher than in week 8 (52%). Influenza A has been the dominant type circulating. Nationwide, during week 9, 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 02/26:

Monthly:

- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meeting with Councilman Knudsen, Scott Nielson, Bobbette Bond, Councilwoman Gallo, Councilwoman Nancy Brune, Mayor Hardy, Councilman Black
- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Governing Board meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada District Board of Health meeting
- Attended the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) Monthly Member call

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Non-partisan Strategies to Advance Health Policy” webinar facilitated by the American Public Health Association
- Attended the “CHPPD 2023 Townhall” webinar facilitated by the American Public Health Association

Week ending 02/19:

Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

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

Monthly:

- Attended the Monthly County Health Officer meeting
- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meeting with Commissioner Segerblom and Commissioner Kirkpatrick

Quarterly:

- Attended the Las Vegas BAC meeting

Media/Interviews/Panelist/Presenter:

- Presented at the Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services meeting

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “CMA – Virtual Grand Rounds: COVID-19 Therapeutics – When and How to Treat” webinar facilitated by the California Medical Association
- Attended the “Applying a Decision Making Support Tool for HIV Care: HIV-ASSIST in Primary Care” webinar facilitated by the Clinical Care Options LLC

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Attended the City of North Las Vegas Council meeting

Week ending 02/12:

Monthly:

- Attended the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) Monthly Member call

Quarterly:

- Participated in the Nevada State EMS Advisory Committee meeting

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Cities: The Future of Health – Urban Health Agenda” webinar facilitated by Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC)
- Attended the “February Doc Talk: Race-based Medicine and its Role in Health Inequities, Disparities, and Interpersonal Racism” webinar facilitated by Immunize Nevada

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Attended the CDC Response All-STLT update call
- Participated in a planning meeting for the Public Health Presentation at the Assembly HHS Committee

- Participated in a meeting with Julia Peek regarding the reporting requirements for the Environmental Health funds
- Participated in the Latinx Steering Committee with the Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition at UNLV
- Participated in a meeting with Dr. Luis Medina regarding the ACGME ID Fellowship Program