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NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

Locals Learn Foodborne Illness Strategies

Carson City – Forty-five public health participants from all over Nevada and parts of northern California gathered for two days to learn skills for responding to foodborne illness outbreaks such as E. coli and salmonella. The training, entitled “Epi-Ready Team Training: A Workshop on Foodborne Illness Response Strategies,” was brought by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Food Safety Office and the Nevada State Health Division.

“It is critical that Nevada’s public health professionals possess the very best skills for handling foodborne illness outbreaks such as from contaminated spinach or the recent ground turkey problem,” said Richard Whitley, Administrator of the Nevada State Health Division.

The training included interactive group exercises, question and answer sessions, and didactic lectures on passive surveillance, outbreak determination, environmental assessment, epidemiological investigation, laboratory guidance and final report writing.

The vast majority of foodborne outbreaks are detected and investigated entirely at the state and local levels. “A team approach during the investigation is essential to correctly identify the contaminated food as quickly as possible,” said Don Sharp MD, Deputy Director with the CDC Food Safety Office. “The goal of Epi-Ready is for participants to gain new skills and knowledge that will be helpful in future outbreak response.”

The Epi-Ready trainers are from various local and state health departments and the CDC. CDC funds NEHA to conduct four workshops per year throughout the U.S. Participants have come from all 50 states as well as several other countries. This is the third Epi-Ready workshop conducted in Nevada since 2005.

For more information about the Nevada State Health Division, go to: <http://health.nv.gov>

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