

Richard Whitley, M.S.
Administrator

Tracey D. Green, M.D.
State Health Officer



Contact Name: **Martha Framsted, PIO**
Phone Number: **775.684.4014**
Release Date: **February 23, 2012**
Page 1 of 1

NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION

NEWS RELEASE

Norovirus: Smart Residential Facilities Report It Immediately

Nevada State Health Division provides education and guidance to keep outbreaks small

Carson City – The Nevada State Health Division (NSHD) advises all Nevadans that outbreaks of norovirus, a potentially serious gastrointestinal infection characterized by nausea, diarrhea and cramping, in residential healthcare facilities are best handled when the facilities report outbreaks to the Health Division as soon as they are suspected. Health Division professionals assist facilities by providing precise recommendations such as social distancing and cleaning procedures to minimize the number of other residents and staff who could become infected.

“Immediately if not sooner,” says Michelle Urrutia, Outbreak Manager at NSHD when asked when facilities should report. “If there is any significant increase in illness among residents, it’s time to call.” Upon receiving the report, the Outbreak Manager gathers and analyzes data about the outbreak, then recommends exactly what steps should be taken to keep the situation as controlled as possible. Facilities with norovirus outbreaks that report early and follow Health Division recommendations minimize the spread of the disease. Facilities that postpone reporting do not fare as well, and the disease can spread to as many as half or more of the other residents and staff.

“The Health Division works with the facilities, not against them,” says Dr. Tracey Green, State Health Officer. “A facility with healthy residents is in everyone’s best interest.”

The Health Division appeals to visitors of healthcare facility residents to be proactive regarding outbreaks and the resulting precautionary measures that occur. Things visitors can do include:

- Let facility administrators know you expect prompt reporting of outbreaks or suspected outbreaks to the Nevada State Health Division.
- Thank facility administrators when precautionary measures are in place at the facility.
- Report to staff any evidence or hearsay that the person you are visiting or other residents are experiencing symptoms.
- Always wash hands thoroughly before and after visiting a healthcare facility.

For more information about norovirus, see www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus.htm.
For more information about the Nevada State Health Division, see www.health.nv.gov.

###



Rand Whitley

Richard Whitley, Administrator

4150 Technology Way, Suite 300 Carson City, Nevada 89706
Phone (775) 684-4200, Fax (775) 684-4211
NEVADA STATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER