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TO: State Board of Health Members

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

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention Summit

On August 1, the Southern Nevada Health District, partners and community members convened for the 2024 Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention Summit. Titled “The Beat of Community: Exploring the Changing Substance Use Movement,” the summit focused on addressing and prioritizing the evolving needs of the local response to the overdose crisis. The summit was held at the Cox Pavilion 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89154 and coordinated by the Health District in collaboration with the PACT Coalition, Nevada HIDTA’s Overdose Response Strategy, and the Nevada Institute for Children’s Research & Policy.

Participants in the summit addressed ways of bringing attention to the needs of people who use drugs and their loved ones as well as emphasized the flexibility that is needed to embrace fresh perspectives and innovative approaches to the overdose crisis.

Topics of the summit included:

- Surveillance of the local drug supply
- Exploring strengths and readiness for substance misuse prevention in Southern Nevada
- Understanding the efficacy and benefits of overdose prevention sites
- Trauma-informed care
- Digital outreach
- Field-based Wound Care for non-clinicians

The keynote speaker was Sam Rivera, executive director of OnPoint NYC, a New York-based overdose prevention site. Rivera was recognized as one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People of 2023. The summit also included the showing of “Silence in the Streets,” a documentary film about the challenges faced by people who live in urban environments, the social determinants of health for those in U.S. cities and the barriers people face when seeking health care.

National Community Health Center Week

The Southern Nevada Community Health Center celebrated National Health Center Week August 4-10, by raising awareness of its services, celebrating its dedicated employees, and showing appreciation for patients with giveaways and raffle prizes.

Community health centers provide comprehensive care to more than 30 million patients at 14,500 sites throughout the country. National Health Center Week is a time to spotlight the ways in which these vital

organizations improve the well-being of the communities they serve by increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Nationally, one in 11 Americans are health center patients. Of those:

- 19% are uninsured
- 61% are publicly insured
- 90% are low-income
- 64% are members of racial and/or ethnic minority groups

At the local level, the Southern Nevada Community Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center, offers services at its main location at 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, and a second location at the Fremont Public Health Center at 2380 E. Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 89104. Services provided include primary care, family planning, the Ryan White Program, behavioral health, sexual health, refugee health, pharmacy, telehealth and enabling services.

In 2023, the Southern Nevada Community Health Center served 9,863 patients for a total of 23,351 patient encounters, of which 11,154 (47.8%) were provided to uninsured patients. The Southern Nevada Community Health Center offers services on a sliding fee scale, which allows patients to pay according to their income and federal poverty levels, and no one is turned away due to an inability to pay. In 2023, sliding fee adjustments saved Southern Nevada Community Health Center patients more than \$2.8 million for health care services provided.

For more information about the Southern Nevada Community Health Center, go to www.snchc.org. For information about National Health Center Week, visit <https://healthcenterweek.org/about-nhcw/>.

Legionnaires' Disease Investigation

On July 26, the Health District announced it was investigating two travel-associated cases of Legionnaires' disease in guests who stayed at Caesars Palace Hotel and Casino. On two occasions during the last six months, individuals were diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease shortly after a stay at Caesars Palace Hotel and Casino. One individual stayed during December 2023; the other individual stayed during June 2024.

Water sampling was conducted after learning of each case. Water sampling after the first case was conducted in the Augustus Tower, guest rooms and other identified potential sources, and all samples tested negative for *Legionella*. Water sampling from the property's Palace Tower was conducted in July after learning of the second case. Nineteen initial samples were taken at various points in the water system. One sample tested positive for *Legionella*; all other samples tested negative. The facility conducted remediation of the water system and subsequent testing came back negative. The facility is cooperating with the Health District's investigation and steps to notify guests of the potential for exposure and ways to minimize risk were implemented.

Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease will usually begin within two to 10 days after exposure to the bacteria. However, people should watch for symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches and headaches for up to two weeks after exposure. Guests who stayed at Caesars Palace prior to July 11, 2024, and have not developed symptoms are not at risk for disease. Guests whose stay at Caesars Palace included time from July 11, 2024 to July 24, 2024 and who experienced symptoms up to 14 days after their stay should report their illness to the Health District using a survey posted on its website at <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7913781/24-036-Investigation-Survey-Caesars-Palace>.

People who are at increased risk of getting sick include:

- People 50 years or older
- Current or former smokers
- People with chronic lung disease
- People with weakened immune systems
- People who take drugs that can weaken their immune systems (after a transplant operation or chemotherapy)
- People with underlying illnesses such as diabetes, kidney failure, or liver failure

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

CredibleMind

The Health District has partnered with CredibleMind, an online digital mental health platform, to provide the community with free and confidential access to a large library of mental health and well-being resources. The site is available to the public at ClarkCountyThrive.crediblemind.com.

With the growing demand for mental and behavioral health services, this platform provides credible, evidence-based mental health and wellness information along with tools and resources designed to build individual and community resilience. At the CredibleMind platform, Clark County residents can find over a dozen scientifically reviewed assessments to help users understand mental health topics such as anxiety, depression, burnout, substance use, and identify well-being support services. Information and resources are available in English and Spanish. There are also thousands of vetted apps, podcasts, articles and videos across a range of mental health and wellness topics, as well as tools that can help users focus on building skills to improve their mental and emotional well-being at work, home and in the community.

Users of the site must be 13 years of age or older to create an account. Account activation is not required to access the site and its resources. All information provided is confidential.

National Obesity Month

September is Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, a time to learn about how to prevent obesity and reduce the stigma around it, and the Health District's Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, along with Partners for a Healthy Nevada Coalition will be promoting the 5-2-1-0 guidelines. These evidence-based recommendations can help children — and people of all ages — adopt healthier lifestyles.

The 5-2-1-0 guidelines encourage people to:

- Eat 5 fruits and vegetables each day
- Get 2 hours or less of recreational screen time each day
- Get 1 hour of physical activity each day
- Drink 0 sugary beverages each day

Obesity is a complex, chronic disease with many contributing factors. Children with obesity are more likely to be diagnosed with related chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. They are also more likely to have obesity as adults. In Clark County, approximately 15% of high school students have obesity and 17% are overweight. In Nevada, 33% of children entering kindergarten already have obesity

or are overweight. Nationwide, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that approximately 19.3% of children (14.4 million) have obesity.

Racial and ethnic disparities in obesity underscore the need to address social determinants of health such as poverty, education and housing, to remove barriers to health. In the United States, 25% of Hispanic children; 24.2% of non-Hispanic Black children; 16.1% of non-Hispanic white children; and 8.7% of non-Hispanic Asian children have obesity.

During Childhood Obesity Awareness Month and throughout the year, the Health District promotes access to its free programs and resources that help families live healthier lives. For activities and events scheduled during the month as well as resources in English and Spanish, go to the [Get Healthy Clark County](#) and Spanish-language [Viva Saludable](#) websites or call (702) 759-1270.

Mosquito Surveillance Update

As of August 19, Health District Environmental Health staff members have set 2,232 traps throughout Clark County and submitted 2,523 sample pools, representing 39,485 mosquitoes, to the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory for analysis. Of the submissions, 385 sample pools in 46 ZIP codes have tested positive for West Nile virus and 21 tested sample pools in eight ZIP codes tested positive for St. Louis encephalitis.

In Clark County, there have been 24 cases of West Nile virus reported in humans, 13 neuroinvasive cases — all requiring hospitalization — and 11 non-neuroinvasive cases. There have been no reported deaths this season. There was minimal West Nile virus activity reported in 2020, 2021, and 2023. In 2019, 43 confirmed human cases were reported. Two human cases of West Nile Virus were reported in 2023. West Nile virus is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito.

Most people infected with the virus will not develop symptoms. People who become ill may develop fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. Some people may develop a neuroinvasive form of the disease that causes encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord). About one in five people infected with West Nile virus will develop symptoms that can include fever, headache, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea or rash. About one in 150 will develop more serious, sometimes fatal, illness. People who think they might have West Nile should talk with their health care provider.

The Health District continues to urge people to Fight the Bite and reduce the risk of mosquito-borne illnesses by taking preventive measures:

- Eliminate standing water and other breeding sources around their homes. *Aedes aegypti* breed in small containers that collect rain or irrigation water, such as children's toys, wheelbarrows and plant saucers, and even bottle caps.
- Prevent mosquito bites by using an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent. Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Report mosquito activity to the Health District's surveillance program at (702) 759-1633. To report a green pool, people should [contact](#) their local code enforcement agency.

More Fight the Bite tips and resources are available at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/programs/mosquito-surveillance/mosquito-bite-prevention/ and on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/prevention/index.html.

The Health District's seasonal mosquito surveillance reports are available at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/programs/mosquito-surveillance/arbovirus-update/.

National HIV Testing Day

In observance of National HIV Testing Day on June 27, the Health District and the Southern Nevada Health Consortium provided free HIV testing at a variety of community locations. The campaign, themed, "Level up your self-love: check your status," encouraged people to get tested, know their HIV status, and get linked to care and treatment.

Free HIV Testing was available on National HIV Testing Day, including the following partner locations:

- TRAC-B Exchange, 6114 West Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89146
- Community Counseling Center, 714 E. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89104
- The Center, 401 S. Maryland Pkwy., Las Vegas, NV 89101
- AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) MEOW Wolf, 3215 S. Rancho, Las Vegas, NV 89102
- AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), 3201 S. Maryland Pkwy., #218, Las Vegas, NV 89101
- Walgreens, 7599 West Lake Mead Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89128 (provided by Sagebrush Health)
- Walgreens, 451 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107 (provided by UMC)

Approximately 1.2 million people in the United States have HIV, with about 13 percent unaware of their status. In 2021, an estimated 32,100 new HIV infections occurred in the U.S. in 2021. Clark County reported 488 new HIV diagnoses in 2022, with 11,518 people living with HIV. HIV disproportionately impacts racial and ethnic minorities and gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Antiretroviral treatment (ART) has transformed HIV infection from a fatal illness to a manageable chronic condition. Early and consistent ART therapy after diagnosis is essential for controlling HIV, minimizing long-term immune system damage, reducing HIV levels in the bloodstream, reducing illnesses, and lowering transmission risk to intimate partners. With ART, HIV-positive people can remain healthy for many years.

The Health District also offered Express HIV testing at its Sexual Health Clinic located at the Southern Nevada Community Health Center, 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, and the Fremont Public Health Center, 2830 E. Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 89104.

The Health District's Sexual Health Outreach and Prevention Program (SHOPP) offers no-cost HIV/STI screenings as part of Sexually Transmitted Infection Express Testing on a year-round basis:

- Southern Nevada Health District Main Public Health Center, 280 S. Decatur, Las Vegas, NV 89107; Monday – Thursday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Fremont Public Health Center, 2830 E. Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 89104; Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

The Health District's Collect2Protect program also provides free at-home HIV tests, a convenient and private testing option. The kits are available on the [Collect2Protect](#) page.

