



DATE: March 7, 2025

TO: State Board of Health Members

FROM: Cassius Lockett, PhD, District Health Officer

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory Groundbreaking

The Southern Nevada Health District hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the expansion of the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory on February 19. The addition of 12,600 square feet will enhance the laboratory's capacity to support local and neighboring counties, improve pandemic preparedness and foster collaborations with academic institutions.

Participants included Congresswoman Susie Lee, Southern Nevada District Board of Health members Vice-Chair Scott Nielson, North Las Vegas Councilman Scott Black, Henderson Councilwoman Monica Larson, as well as representatives from Senator Cortez Masto's, Senator Jacky Rosen's, Congresswoman Susie Lee's and Las Vegas City Councilwoman Shondra Summer Armstrong's office. Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in guided tours of the current laboratory facility to learn more about its role in communicable disease surveillance, high-complexity testing and emergency response efforts.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for increased public health capacity. As Southern Nevada's population continues to grow, expanding the laboratory will enhance the region's ability to respond to public health threats efficiently. In-house testing improves turnaround time and reduces cost, ensuring the community is better prepared for emerging health challenges.

To learn more about the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory, view a video on the Health District's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GoQE9M0glw>.

Behavioral Health Clinic Open House

The Health District hosted an open house to showcase the expansion of the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Behavioral Health Clinic on January 14. The Southern Nevada Community Health Center is a Federally Qualified Health Center. The Behavioral Health Clinic provides services for patients receiving medical services within the Community Health Center, with a goal to expand the program. The Behavioral Health Clinic provides integrated care for patients seeking both primary care and behavioral health services for mild to moderate mental health concerns, collaborating with community partners to assist with treating patients with more complex conditions.

For more information about the services provided by the Southern Nevada Community Health Center, go to www.snchc.org.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

In observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, the Southern Nevada Health District joined with partners for a community health fair on Friday, February 7, to provide additional health services to the public. National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day highlights efforts to reduce HIV as well as other sexually transmitted infections and address HIV stigma in Black/African American communities.

The health fair was presented by the Southern Nevada Health Consortium and held at Mario's Westside Market, 1425 W. Lake Mead Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89106. The Henderson Equality Center offered free HIV testing, and the Health District provided Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing in addition to safe sex kits and education about pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP, PEP).

The Health District also offered blood pressure screenings, smoking/vaping cessation information and vaccinations for mpox, COVID-19 and flu. The event included food, vendors and free entertainment. Attendees were able to schedule mammograms provided by Nevada Health Centers, and most major insurances are accepted.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day culminated with the Awareness Day Dinner at The Center. With the theme, "Climbing Higher Mountains," the free evening of food, family and community included presentations from local leaders and performances from homegrown talent. Free HIV testing was also available.

Additional Testing Opportunities

Free HIV testing was available on February 7 at the Health District's Fremont Public Health Center, 2830 E. Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 89104, for clients without symptoms related to sexually transmitted diseases. No appointments were needed. Additional testing for syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia was also available.

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. No appointments are needed, but clients must be without symptoms. Additional testing for syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia is also available at the following locations:

- 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.

Same-day HIV testing and treatment services are also available in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center, 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, and at the Fremont Public Health Center. HIV services include testing, medical, behavioral health, nutrition, case management, pharmaceutical, and education. PEP and PrEP navigation and treatment are available for those who test negative for HIV. Services are offered for insured and uninsured patients. Sliding fee scale discounts are available to all self-pay patients who qualify.

Additionally, free at-home HIV test kits are available through the Health District's [Collect2Protect](#) program.

The Health District and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend all people between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once. People who have continued risk of HIV

infection should consider getting an HIV test at least once every year and as frequently as every three months for those at higher risk. Early diagnosis is critical for people with HIV so that they can benefit from antiretroviral therapy (ART). ART decreases HIV-related illnesses, reduces HIV levels in the bloodstream, and lowers the risk of transmitting HIV to intimate partners. With ART, HIV-positive people can remain healthy for many years.

Black/African American people accounted for 40% of the nation's 34,800 new HIV diagnoses in 2019 but made up only 13% of the U.S. population. Approximately 13% of Black people with HIV in the U.S. still do not know their status, and few are receiving adequate HIV care and treatment. In addition, PrEP use is lowest and least prescribed among Black people as compared to white, Hispanic and Latino people.

American Heart Month

February is American Heart Month, and the Southern Nevada Health District and community partners offered free programs and classes throughout the month to help people reduce their risk factors for heart disease. Heart disease and stroke are the first and fifth leading causes of death in the United States, respectively. Every 43 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a heart attack, and every four minutes, someone dies from a stroke. In 2022, cardiovascular disease accounted for 702,880 deaths in the U.S., with heart disease and stroke claiming more lives than all forms of cancer and chronic lower respiratory disease combined.

In Clark County, 3.5% of adults reported experiencing angina or coronary heart disease in 2023, up from 3.2% in 2021. 5.2% of adults reported experiencing angina, coronary heart disease or heart attack in 2023. White non-Hispanic adults had the highest prevalence of these conditions:

- White non-Hispanic: 6%
- Black non-Hispanic: 4.2%
- Hispanic: 2.7%
- Asian non-Hispanic: 1.5%
- American Indian non-Hispanic: Data not available

Maintaining a healthy heart is central to overall well-being. The Health District reminds everyone that it's never too late to adopt healthier habits to reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke and improve cardiovascular health. The Health District teamed up with community partners to offer additional resources to the public during February, but heart healthy classes and resources are available throughout the year. Access the [Get Healthy Clark County](#) website and [Community Calendar](#) for programs, classes and resources.

Free Programs and Resources

At the beginning of the New year, the Health District reminded everyone that small, positive changes to their health can lead to lasting, transformative results. The new year is the perfect time to commit to positive changes, whether it's eating healthier, getting active or quitting smoking. The Health District, through its Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, provides free programs and resources to help individuals achieve their goals and kick off a healthy new year:

- **Quit Smoking:** Find tools and support to help you live tobacco-free.
English: www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/live-tobacco-free/quit-smoking/
Spanish: www.vivasaludable.org/live-tobacco-free/quit-smoking/
- **Get Moving:** Learn the basics of physical activity and how to stay active.
English: www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/get-moving/how-to-be-active/physical-activity-basics/
Spanish: www.vivasaludable.org/get-moving/how-to-be-active/physical-activity-basics/

- **Eat Better:** Access nutrition tips to make healthier food choices.
English: www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/eat-better/nutrition-basics/
Spanish: www.vivasaludable.org/eat-better/nutrition-basics/
- **Heart Health:** Take steps to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease:
English: www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/manage-your-risk/heart-disease/
Spanish: www.vivasaludable.org/manage-your-risk/heart-disease/
- **Diabetes Management:** Get guidance on managing diabetes with local resources.
English: www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/manage-your-risk/local-diabetes-resources/
Spanish: www.vivasaludable.org/recursos-locales-para-la-diabetes/
- **Obesity Prevention:** Find tools to help maintain a healthy weight.
English: www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/manage-your-risk/obesity/
Spanish: www.vivasaludable.org/obesidad-2/
- **Community Calendar and Apps:** Stay connected with local activities and free mobile apps designed to support health goals.
English: www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/community-calendar/ and www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/mobile-apps/
Spanish: www.vivasaludable.org/calendario/ and www.vivasaludable.org/mobile-apps/

Additionally, the Health District partners with CredibleMind, an online 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.

Diabetes Classes

The Health District's 2025 schedule of free diabetes self-management, education and support classes, offered in English, Spanish, in-person and online started in mid-January.

The Health District's Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion offers diabetes classes throughout the year at the Main Public Health Center, 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107. Facilitated by trained health educators, participants learn how to manage their blood sugar, stay physically active and adopt healthier eating habits.

The Health District is currently accepting registrations for in-person classes that run through mid-May. Upcoming class are scheduled for:

English:

March 19 and 26: 10 a.m.–noon

May 15 and 22: 10 a.m.–noon

Spanish:

March 17 and 24: 10 a.m.–noon

April 15 and 22: 2-4 p.m.

May 12 and 19: 10 a.m.–noon

To register, call (702) 759-1270, email gethealthy@snhd.org or complete the [Diabetes Self-Management Interest Form](#). Registration for Spanish-language classes is available at the [Viva Saludable](#) website.

Diabetes ranks as the eighth leading cause of death in the United States and is the primary cause of kidney failure, lower limb amputations and blindness. Individuals with diabetes are also at an increased risk of severe complications from flu and COVID-19. In 2023, 12.8% of adults in Clark County, or 238,102 people, were living with diabetes. In Nevada, approximately 283,700 people—11.3% of the state's adult population—have been diagnosed with the condition. Nationwide, more than 38 million Americans have diabetes, with 8.7 million unaware of their diagnosis, putting their health at greater risk. Each year, an estimated 1.2 million Americans are newly diagnosed with diabetes.

To learn more about diabetes resources in Southern Nevada, go to [Get Healthy Clark County|Local Diabetes Resources](#) or [Viva Saludable|Recursos locales para la diabetes](#). For information about additional classes, events and programs offered by the Health District, visit the [Get Healthy Clark County Community Calendar](#).

Tobacco-Free Living Summit

Because We Matter, a smoking and vaping prevention initiative of the Health District's Tobacco Control Program for African Americans in Clark County hosted the 2nd Annual Tobacco-Free Living Summit on January 30 at the Pearson Community Center.

The free, public event focused on the impact of tobacco use among African Americans, featuring experts and community leaders who discussed key issues such as the youth vaping crisis, flavored tobacco products, tobacco control policies and available cessation resources. The summit examined the effects of smoking on the community and was designed to share strategies for reducing tobacco use.

Influenza Surveillance

Influenza surveillance for Clark County, Nevada includes data collected from local acute care hospitals and other health care providers. In Clark County, as of February 1, 2025, for the 2024-2025 influenza season, 1,249 influenza-associated hospitalizations have been reported. Currently, there have been 48 deaths associated with influenza reported for the season. The percentage of emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for influenza-like illness (fever plus cough or sore throat) decreased from 6.0% during weeks 4 to 5.8% during week 5. Currently, Influenza A has been the predominant strain detected within the region. During week 5, 7.8% of outpatient visits reported nationally through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to respiratory illness. This percentage exceeds the national baseline of 3.0%. Among 55 states/jurisdictions, the respiratory illness activity level in the state of Nevada is high.

The Southern Nevada Health District will continue to update the public on the progression of the influenza season and encourage influenza vaccination for all people 6 months of age and older without contraindications. Weekly flu surveillance updates are available on the Health District website at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/statistics-surveillance-reports/influenza-surveillance/.