



**DATE: August 27, 2026**

**TO: Southern Nevada District Board of Health Members**

**FROM: Cassius Lockett, PhD, District Health Officer** 

**SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report**

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### **Youth Vaping**

As students returned to classrooms this month, the Southern Nevada Health District highlighted new data showing that youth vaping remains a significant public health concern. Nearly one-third of Clark County high school students have tried e-cigarettes, according to the 2025 Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey. This underscores the need for parents, educators and community members to talk with young people about the risks of nicotine and vaping. The Health District is encouraging families to start conversations early, recognize the signs of vaping and use available resources to help prevent nicotine addiction among youth.

According to the survey, 31% of Clark County high school students and 17% of middle school students have tried e-cigarettes. In addition, 12% of high school students and 8% of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes during the past 30 days. E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Like all tobacco products, e-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive chemical that can affect brain development and impair attention, learning, mood and impulse control.

Most tobacco use begins during adolescence, when young people can be influenced by peer pressure, tobacco marketing and easy access to nicotine products. Among Clark County students who reported using e-cigarettes, the most common source was friends, family members or someone else. Sixty percent of high school students and 59% of middle school students said they obtained a vape this way, illustrating the important role families and communities play in preventing youth access to vaping products.

Marketing and online exposure also contribute to youth interest in vaping. Social media, product placement and depictions of tobacco and nicotine use in entertainment aimed at younger audiences can influence behavior. Nearly three-quarters of students (74%) reported seeing e-cigarette-related content on social media. Research also shows that teens who viewed tobacco- or nicotine-related content on TikTok at least weekly had three times the odds of currently using e-cigarettes.

Disposable vaping devices remain the most commonly used type of e-cigarette among U.S. youth who currently vape, accounting for 55.6% of reported use. Popular brands reported among youth include Geek Bar, Elf Bar and Lost Mary.

Access to tobacco retailers also remains a concern. About 35% of public schools in Las Vegas are within 1,000 feet of a tobacco retailer, highlighting the need for continued prevention, education and enforcement efforts to reduce youth access to nicotine products.

Parents and caregivers can help prevent youth vaping by talking openly with children about the risks of nicotine, asking questions about what they see and hear from friends and online, and recognizing signs that a young person may be using e-cigarettes. Schools and community organizations also play an important role by providing education, support and resources that help young people make healthy choices.

#### **Additional resources**

- [Get Healthy Clark County](#): Resources for parents, educators and youth, including quit-vaping information and educational materials.
- [Nevada Tobacco Quitline](#): Nevada residents age 13 and older can receive free help quitting tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, by calling 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).
- [American Lung Association's NOT for Me](#): A free, interactive eight-week online program designed to help teens quit vaping or smoking
- [Truth Initiative: freedom from nicotine addiction](#): Offers quitting tools and support. Text EXPROGRAM to 88709.
- [My Life, My Quit Quitline](#): For teens 13 years and older. Text START MY QUIT to 36072.

#### **Cyclosporiasis Outbreak**

The Health District has reported 10 cases of cyclosporiasis among Clark County residents in 2026. Three of the cases were likely acquired during travel to states associated with the multistate outbreak that began in May. The individuals traveled during their exposure periods before returning to Clark County. At this time, there is no evidence that their exposure occurred in Clark County or elsewhere in Nevada.

Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by the microscopic parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. Sporadic cases are reported locally each year, and there is no indication of increased local transmission.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are investigating the multistate outbreak linked to shredded iceberg lettuce distributed by Taylor Farms de Mexico and served at certain Taco Bell locations. As of August 5, the CDC reported 6,358 laboratory-confirmed cases and 278 hospitalizations associated with the outbreak.

The best-by dates for the recalled lettuce have passed, and the products should no longer be available in stores or restaurants. People should check any products they still have and should not eat lettuce included in the recall. When purchasing iceberg lettuce that has not been recalled, choose whole heads rather than prewashed, bagged lettuce. Discard the outer two or three layers of whole heads, separate the remaining leaves and rinse them thoroughly under running water. Washing produce can reduce, but does not eliminate, the risk of *Cyclospora* contamination.

Cooking produce thoroughly is the most effective way to reduce the risk of infection. Consumers should also:

- Wash their hands with soap and water before and after handling produce.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting or cooking them.
- Scrub firm produce with a clean produce brush.

- Peel produce when appropriate after washing it.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled or cooked produce as soon as possible.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces or containers that have come into contact with recalled lettuce.

The most common symptom of cyclosporiasis is watery diarrhea. Other symptoms may include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps, bloating, increased gas, nausea, fatigue and, less commonly, vomiting or a low-grade fever. Some people recover without treatment, but symptoms can last several weeks or longer and may go away and then return. Antibiotics can reduce the severity and duration of the illness.

Dehydration is a primary concern, particularly for young children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems. People who have experienced watery diarrhea for more than a few days should contact a health care provider and ask whether testing for Cyclospora is appropriate. Anyone experiencing signs of severe dehydration, including dizziness, weakness or decreased urination, should seek medical care promptly.

People who are immunocompromised or especially concerned about infection may consider choosing thoroughly cooked produce while the outbreak remains under investigation. People should also monitor public health advisories and avoid foods specifically identified as part of the outbreak.

For more information about cyclosporiasis, visit [www.cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis](http://www.cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis).

### **Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention Summit**

Public health professionals, behavioral health experts, community leaders and advocates gathered Thursday, August 13, for the seventh annual Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention Summit hosted by the Southern Nevada Health District. The event explored the latest approaches to preventing substance misuse, reducing overdose deaths and supporting long-term recovery.

This year's theme, "The Science of Hope: Strategies to Reduce Substance Use and Build Resilience in Our Community," highlighted evidence-based approaches to strengthening prevention efforts, improving access to treatment and recovery services, and building healthier, more resilient communities.

The sold-out event was presented by the Health District in partnership with the PACT Coalition, Nevada High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy.

Summit sessions explored a wide range of timely issues, including:

- Emerging drug trends, overdose response and prevention strategies.
- Integrated approaches to mental health and substance use care.
- Peer-recovery support, lived experience and recovery-friendly workplace initiatives.
- Community partnerships to strengthen prevention, treatment, rescue and recovery efforts.

The keynote speaker was Mary Jadwisiak, founder and CEO of Holding the Hope, a behavioral health consulting and training organization focused on peer support and recovery. Additional presenters included experts from the Health District, the PACT Coalition, Foundation for Recovery, U.S. VETS Las Vegas and other behavioral health and community organizations. The summit also featured a panel discussion, "The Long Game: A Decade of Coalition-Driven Overdose Prevention in Southern Nevada," recognizing the Southern Nevada Opioid Advisory Council as it marks its 10th anniversary.

### **West Nile virus**

As of August 10, the Health District is reporting one neuroinvasive case of West Nile virus in a Clark County resident. The Health District has set 1,917 traps throughout the county and submitted 1,976 sample pools—representing 38,023 mosquitoes—to the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory for analysis. Of the sample pools submitted, 41 have tested positive for West Nile virus. No sample pools have tested positive for St. Louis encephalitis or Western equine encephalitis.

The Health District continues its mosquito surveillance efforts throughout Clark County and reminds residents that the presence of West Nile virus in mosquitoes increases the risk of human infection.

The Health District recommends the following steps to reduce the risk of mosquito bites:

- Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Remove standing water around homes and businesses where mosquitoes can breed.
- Ensure window and door screens fit properly to keep mosquitoes outside.

The Health District works with local partners to implement mosquito control measures when virus activity is detected. Residents can stay informed about local mosquito surveillance activity by visiting the Health District's weekly West Nile virus surveillance reports at [www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/programs/mosquito-surveillance/arbovirus-update/](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/programs/mosquito-surveillance/arbovirus-update/).

### **Community Meetings**

#### **Week ending 08/02:**

##### Biweekly:

- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with Direct Reports
- Participated in the Lab Expansion meeting

##### Monthly:

- Participated in the Disease Surveillance & Control Division leadership meeting

##### Quarterly:

- Participated in the Community Health Division leadership meeting

##### Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Attended an introductory meeting with Teddy Parker and Dan Polsenberg
- Attended a meeting with Brian Rosenberg and Russell Suzuki from HealthIE Nevada
- Facilitated the SNHD Waterfall Call Down Drill
- Participated in a meeting with Dr. Nemec and Dr. Packham regarding a Medical Student Survey
- Attended a meeting with Dr. Edwin Oh

#### **Week ending 07/26:**

##### Biweekly:

- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with Direct Reports
- Attended the New Hire Orientation
- Facilitated the Health Executive Council meeting
- Participated in the EIS Bi-weekly Check-in meeting

Monthly:

- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meetings with Mayor Pro Tem Gallo, Commissioner Becker, Councilwoman Summers-Armstrong, Councilwoman Larson, Scott Nielson, Bobbette Bond, and Mayor Hardy
- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Governing Board meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada District Board of Health meeting

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Attended a meeting with Assembly Member Tracy Brown-May

**Week ending 07/19:**

Biweekly:

- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with Direct Reports
- Participated in the Lab Expansion meeting

Monthly:

- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meetings with Mayor Pro Tem Scott Black and Commissioner Kirkpatrick

Quarterly:

- Participated in the Public Health Advisory Board

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the virtual NACCHO 360 Conference

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Attended a meeting with Scoot Nielson regarding the lab expansion
- Attended a meeting regarding Ebola Response Protocols
- Attended a meeting with representative from Northern Nevada Public Health regarding Karius Test – Legionella
- Attended a meeting with the CDC EIS Field Officer Supervisor, in preparation for the new EIS Officer

**Week ending 07/12:**

Biweekly:

- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with Direct Reports
- Attended the New Hire Orientation
- Facilitated the Health Executive Council meeting

Monthly:

- Participated in the Monthly Leadership Finance meeting

Media/Interviews/Panelist/Presenter/Events:

- Attended the Grand Opening of the new SNHD Outdoor Break Area

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Attended a meeting with representatives from Healthcare in Action and the Southern Nevada Community Health Center
- Attended a meeting with representatives from Healthcare in Action and Clark County

**Week ending 07/05:**

Biweekly:

- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with Direct Reports
- Participated in the Lab Expansion meeting

Monthly:

- Participated in the Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Update meeting

Media/Interviews/Panelist/Presenter/Events:

- Presented at the UMC Academic Summit

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Attended an internal meeting regarding the Street Medicine Program
- Attended a meeting with Dr. Akpinar-Elci and Megan Comlossy regarding the UNR School of Public Health