



**DATE:** February 27, 2025

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

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

**SUBJECT:** District Health Officer Report

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**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.

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>.

**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.

### **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/](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/statistics-surveillance-reports/influenza-surveillance/).

### **Community Meetings**

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

##### Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Participated in the HRSA Operational Site Visit (OSV) pre-visit call with the review team

#### **Week ending 01/26:**

N/A

#### **Week ending 01/19:**

##### Monthly:

- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meeting with Commissioner Kirkpatrick

##### Quarterly:

- Attended the Southern Nevada Health District Public Health Advisory Board meeting

##### Biannually:

- Attended the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Strategic Planning Committee meeting

##### Media/Interviews/Panelist/Presenter/Events:

- Attended and Presented at the Grand Opening of the Behavior Health Clinic at the Southern Nevada Health District Main Facility

#### **Week ending 01/12:**

##### Monthly:

- Attended the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) Monthly Member Call

#### **Week ending 01/05:**

N/A