



DATE: February 26, 2026

TO: Southern Nevada District Board of Health Members

FROM: Cassius Lockett, PhD, District Health Officer 

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

In observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Saturday, Feb. 7, the Southern Nevada Health District joined community partners to provide additional health services to the community.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day highlights efforts to reduce HIV and other sexually transmitted infections while addressing HIV-related stigma in Black/African American communities. Black/African American people continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black/African American individuals, who make up about 12% of the U.S. population, accounted for roughly 38% of the approximately 39,000 new HIV diagnoses in 2023. In Clark County, there were 140 new HIV diagnoses among Black people in 2024, compared to 106 new diagnoses among white people.

The Health District and the CDC recommend that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once. People with ongoing risk should be tested at least annually and as often as every three months for those at higher risk.

The observance included a variety of activities over a two-day period:

Friday, February 6

- The Health District offered free HIV testing at Sunny Market, 600 W. Lake Mead Blvd., North Las Vegas, NV 89030. Safe sex kits and education about pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP, PEP) were also available.
- The National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Dinner was held at The Center, 401 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89101. With the theme “A Brand New Day,” the evening of food, family and community also included free HIV testing.

Saturday, February 7

- The Center’s mobile testing unit was available for rapid HIV and Hepatitis C screening at the Southern Nevada Health Consortium’s Health Fair, held at the new West Las Vegas Library, 1861 N. MLK Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89106.
- Free HIV testing was offered at McDonald’s, 3010 Las Vegas Blvd. N., North Las Vegas, NV 89030.

Additional year-round testing opportunities

Free HIV testing is also available at the following Health District locations:

- Main Public Health Center, 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, Monday–Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed noon to 1 p.m.)

The Health District's Sexual Health Outreach and Prevention Program offers no-cost HIV/STI screenings year-round through its Sexually Transmitted Infection Express Testing program. 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. to 4:30 p.m.
- Fremont Public Health Center, 2830 E. Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 89104; Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Henderson Public Health Center, 220 E. Horizon Dr., Suites A & C, Henderson, NV 89015; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Mesquite Public Health Center, 150 N. Yucca St., Suite 5, Mesquite, NV 89027; 4th Monday of every month, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Same-day HIV testing and treatment services are also available at 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, pharmacy services and education. PEP and PrEP services are available for those who test negative for HIV. Services are offered for insured and uninsured patients. Sliding fee scale discounts are available to eligible self-pay patients. For clinic hours and additional information, go to SNCHC.org. Free at-home HIV test kits also are available through the Health District's [Collect2Protect](#) program.

Early diagnosis allows people with HIV to benefit from antiretroviral therapy (ART), which reduces HIV-related illnesses, lowers the amount of virus in the blood, and decreases the risk of transmission to partners. With treatment, people living with HIV can remain healthy for many years.

Despite national progress in HIV prevention and treatment, about 13% of the more than 1.2 million people living with HIV in the U.S. are unaware of their status and need testing and care. Black individuals also have lower access to key prevention tools. The latest available data show that Black individuals represented around 15% of PrEP users in 2024, despite accounting for more than one-third of new HIV diagnoses, highlighting ongoing gaps in the equitable uptake of PrEP compared with white and Hispanic/Latino populations.

For more information on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, visit [HIV Awareness Days](#).

3rd Annual Tobacco Free Living Summit

The Southern Nevada Health District's Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion hosted the 3rd Annual Tobacco-Free Living Summit through its Tobacco Control Program. The summit addressed the detrimental effects of tobacco use within the Black community. To help reduce this burden, the Tobacco Control Program created Because We Matter LV, an African American-focused tobacco initiative, which guides the program's efforts and served as the foundation for this year's event.

The summit brought together community members, advocates and experts on February 19, at the Dr. William Pearson Community Center, 1625 W. Carey Ave., North Las Vegas, NV 89032. This free, public event focused on urgent issues shaping public health today, including the youth vaping epidemic, flavored tobacco products, tobacco control policies, and proven cessation resources. Held during Black History Month, the summit also explored the disproportionate impact of tobacco use on Black communities and highlighted actionable strategies to promote healthier, tobacco-free lives.

Smoking is a leading risk factor for chronic and life-threatening conditions, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), stroke, heart attack and lung cancer. In Clark County, Black adults experience a disproportionate burden of these smoking-related conditions. In 2023, Black adults in Clark County had the second-highest smoking prevalence among racial and ethnic groups at 15.2%, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Only residents categorized as other race reported a higher prevalence, at 16.3%. That same year, 10.9% of Black adults in Clark County reported having COPD, emphysema or chronic bronchitis—the highest prevalence among all racial and ethnic groups in the county. Black adults also had the highest prevalence of stroke in 2023, at 4.4%.

The impact of smoking is also evident in mortality data. Between 2018 and 2022, Black adults in Clark County experienced one of the highest age-adjusted lung cancer death rates, at 33.4 deaths per 100,000 population, according to the National Cancer Institute. In 2022, Black adults also had the highest age-adjusted death rate from heart attack – 43.5 per 100,000 – based on data from the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.

The summit featured a variety of tobacco-related topics and speakers:

- **Onjewel Smith**, echo, LLC and American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation
Menthol tobacco and cultural exploitation
- **Kayla Ramsey**, Nevada Cancer Coalition
Lung cancer screening matters
- **Dr. Karen Beard**, Amplify! African American Statewide Coordinating Center
Moving beyond cessation
- **DJ Yearwood**, 2023 Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Youth Advocate of the Year
Protecting Black youth from vaping
- **Tracy Truran**, Health Plan of Nevada and Richard Davis, Dignity Health
Rapid-fire session: Nevada cessation programs and resources

Because We Matter LV is a smoking and vaping prevention initiative for African Americans in Clark County and is part of the Health District's Tobacco Control Program. The initiative works to raise awareness, provide culturally relevant education, connect individuals to cessation resources and encourage healthier, smoke- and vape-free lives throughout the community. Learn more about Because We Matter LV at becausewematterlv.org.

American Heart Month

The Health District is recognizing American Heart Month in February by offering free blood pressure screenings and educational events at barbershops, beauty salons and faith-based organizations across Clark County.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and stroke remains a leading cause. Nationwide, someone dies of cardiovascular disease about every 34 seconds, and someone dies of stroke about every 3 minutes and 14 seconds. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force provides its strongest recommendation for routine blood pressure screening, recognizing hypertension as a major, preventable risk factor for heart disease, stroke and heart attack. Identifying and addressing high blood pressure early can significantly reduce the risk of serious cardiovascular events.

Local data highlight persistent disparities in heart health outcomes. In Clark County, Black adults experience a disproportionate burden of cardiovascular disease. In 2023, Black adults had the highest prevalence of hypertension at 40.4% and stroke at 4.4%, and among the highest prevalence of coronary heart disease at 3.3% among racial and ethnic groups in the county, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. In 2022, Black adults in Clark County also had the highest age-adjusted death

rate due to heart attack, at 43.5 per 100,000, based on the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.

American Heart Month events, which were open to the public included:

Salon Talk

A free, educational discussion focused on heart health and its connection to brain health, lifestyle choices and prevention was held on Friday, February 6 at Expertise Cosmetology Institute, 1911 Stella Lake St., Las Vegas, NV 89106.

Free blood pressure screening events were offered at:

- **Expertise Cosmetology Institute**
1911 Stella Lake St., Las Vegas, NV 89106
- **Heat City Fades**
270 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107
- **Executive Cuts**
921 W. Owens Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89106
- **Masterpiece Barbershop**
2300 N. Rainbow Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89108
- **5 Star Barbershop**
2696 W. Ann Rd., North Las Vegas, NV 89031
- **Master Barbering Galo**
8090 Blue Diamond Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89178
- **Ego Tripp**
205 W. Centennial Pkwy, North Las Vegas, NV 89084
- **Mountaintop Faith Ministries**
2845 S. Lindell Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89146
- **Nehemiah Ministries**
3606 N. Rancho Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89130

The Health District encouraged the public to take advantage of these free events to learn their blood pressure numbers and connect with heart health resources available in the community. More information about heart disease and stroke prevention is available at [Get Healthy Clark County | Million Hearts](#).

Influenza Update

As of January 24, 583 influenza-associated hospitalizations and 19 deaths have been reported in Clark County. The percentage of emergency department and urgent care visits for influenza-like illness (ILI—defined as a fever of 100°F or greater and a cough and/or sore throat) increased from 2.8% in week 2 to 3.1% in week 3.

Influenza A has been the predominant influenza type detected among hospitalized cases in Clark County. During week 3, 4.7% of outpatient visits reported nationally through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to respiratory illness, including ILI. This percentage is above the national baseline of 3.1%.

The Health District's Influenza Snapshot and Influenza Report by Age Group are available weekly at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/statistics-surveillance-reports/influenza-surveillance/.

Community Meetings

Week ending 02/01:

Biweekly:

- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with direct reports (Gonzales, Melly, Trujillo, Yapjoco)
- Participated in the Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) Update meeting

Monthly:

- Participated in the 2nd BCHC Monthly Member meeting

Media/Interviews/Panelist/Presenter/Events:

- Opening Remarks at the Health District After Dark

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Participated in a meeting regarding the SNHD fleet vehicles
- Participated in a meeting regarding the Health District After Dark
- Participated in a meeting with the Pharmacy and Finance Departments
- Participated in a meeting regarding the lab expansion

Week ending 01/25:

Biweekly:

- Facilitated the Health Executive Council meeting
- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with direct reports (Anderson-Fintak, Saxton, Trujillo, Zhang)
- Participated in the EIS Bi-weekly Check-in meeting
- Attended the SNHD/Accela Executive Touchpoint call

Monthly:

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

Annually:

- Participated in the DHO Annual Review Committee meeting

Media/Interviews/Panelist/Presenter/Events:

- Attended the Innovation Infrastructure as a Community & Workforce Asset at the City of Las Vegas

Week ending 01/18:

Biweekly:

- Attended the CDC Response All-STLT Update call
- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with direct reports (Carter, Gonzales, Mangla, Trujillo)

Monthly:

- Participated in the NWSS CoE Regional Call
- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meetings with Mayor Pro Tem Scott Black

Bi-monthly:

- Participated in a meeting regarding Public Health Policy Strategy

Quarterly:

- Participated in the Public Health Advisory Board meeting

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Right Sizing Your Wastewater Surveillance Program” webinar facilitated by the University of Denver

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Participated in an internal meeting regarding street medicine billing and reimbursement
- Participated in an internal meeting regarding the Public Accommodation Regulations

Week ending 01/11:

Biweekly:

- Facilitated the Health Executive Council meeting
- Facilitated one-on-one meetings with direct reports (Saxton, Zhang)
- Participated in the EIS Bi-weekly Check-in meeting
- Attended the SNHD/Accela Executive Touchpoint call

Monthly:

- Participated in the Monthly Leadership Finance meeting
- Participated in the BCHC Monthly Member meeting

Bi-monthly:

- Participated in the Leadership/Managers Meeting

Annually:

- Participated in the SNHD Service Award Ceremony

Ad-hoc Meetings:

- Attended the New Hire Orientation
- Attended the SNHD/Accela Go-live Checkpoint call
- Participated in a meeting with Dr. Saloman Amar (Touro University) and Dina Babsky (City of Las Vegas) regarding wastewater surveillance
- Participated in a meeting with Peter Kaufmann and Merrill Landers (UNLV School of Integrated Health Sciences) regarding rural health initiatives