



**DATE:** May 25, 2017

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

**FROM:** Joseph Iser, MD, DrPH, MSc, Chief Health Officer

**SUBJECT:** Chief Health Officer Report

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### **Influenza Update**

As of May 6, 2017 the Health District is reporting 611 flu cases in Clark County and no additional deaths. This is a 3.3 percent decrease in cases compared to last season. Influenza A strains account for 83.5 percent of local cases this season, and influenza B strains account for approximately 16.4 percent of the cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that flu activity continues to decrease in the United States.

### **Legislative Update**

Health District testimony was presented to the Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services on Senate Bill 151 (Public Health Laboratory bill) and Senate Bill 165 (BMI bill). The laboratory bill was requested by the Health District to allow the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory to operate as an independent public health laboratory. Allowing the laboratory to be recognized as a designated county public health laboratory would enable expanded access to resources, equipment, and testing capacity. This bill has been well received, and the Health District continues to work with legislators and partners to move this through the session.

The BMI bill has broad community support from community partners and organizations. It reinstates the requirement to collect height and weight data from designated grades in Washoe and Clark County school districts. This information is vital for documenting trends in obesity rates and identifying at-risk populations to better direct resources and interventions.

### **Ban the Box**

The Health District was asked to review its job application forms for questions related to arrests and convictions by job applicants. "Ban the Box" is a national campaign that calls for removing the questions and check boxes that ask job applicants if they have been arrested or convicted by a court. The Health District's current job application asks if an applicant has pled guilty to, no contest to, or been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony within the last 7 years. If applicants answer yes, they are asked to provide additional information. It is also noted that a conviction will not necessarily bar them from employment with the Health District. Based on the nature of work

and range of jobs offered by the Health District, the 7-year timeframe and exclusion of questions related to arrests are felt to be good criteria for the job applicant process.

### **Norovirus Investigations**

The Southern Nevada Health District has been investigating reports of gastrointestinal outbreaks at local schools. Norovirus was confirmed as the cause of the outbreak in one of the schools. School officials made the decision to self-close so that in-depth cleaning could be conducted. Another local school that was experiencing an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness also self-closed to clean its facility. The Health District is working with the second school to obtain appropriate information and specimens. Prior to these investigations, small outbreaks of norovirus and suspected outbreaks have been reported to the Health District. In addition to investigating reports of illness, Health District staff is working with schools to ensure they have appropriate cleaning protocols and other measures in place to stop the spread of illnesses in their facilities.

The Health District is also reminding the public that regular and appropriate handwashing is one of the most effective prevention methods for reducing the spread of norovirus and other illnesses. People who are ill, or caring for someone who is ill, should wash their hands carefully with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food. Sick people should not prepare food or care for others. Hands should be dried with disposable paper towels. Hands should always be washed after using the toilet, changing diapers, or washing soiled clothes or bedding. Norovirus can be found in vomit or stool before someone feels sick and for two weeks or more after symptoms subside. It is important to incorporate proper hand hygiene into a routine to reduce the spread of illness throughout the year.

Hard, non-porous surfaces that have been contaminated by an ill person should be cleaned, and then disinfected immediately with a chlorine bleach solution made by adding 5-25 tablespoons of household bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite) to one gallon of water. For other disinfectants registered as effective against norovirus see the [Environmental Protection Agency's \(EPA\) Registered Antimicrobial Products Effective against Norovirus](#) webpage.

For additional information about norovirus visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/norovirus/preventing-infection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/preventing-infection.html) and the Health District website at [www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/health-topics/norovirus.php](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/health-topics/norovirus.php).

### **National Infant Immunization Week**

The Health District partnered with Immunize Nevada, Junior League of Las Vegas, and Health Plan of Nevada to commemorate National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) with its annual immunization and health fair. The Community Baby Bash took place on Friday, April 28, from 12:00 – 4:30 p.m. at the Health District's location at 280 S. Decatur Blvd. This year's event was a success, with 176 clients in attendance and 403 vaccines administered. In addition to providing no cost shots for eligible children, community partners offered dental and vision screenings, family resource information, and more. During the event, 45 clients received vision screenings, the Clark County School District-Family and Community Engagement Services (FACES) made contact with 116 parents for follow-up services, and the Department of Welfare and Support Services made

contact with more than 40 families for follow-up related to enrollment in Medicaid. Attendees were also provided with diapers, clothing, and miscellaneous baby items.

### **Community Meetings**

#### **Week of April 24**

- Attended as an experienced health officer at the CDC Health Officers Orientation in Atlanta, GA
- Participated in the Clark County Medical Society Legislative Core Group meeting
- Participated in the Nevada Association of Local Health Officers meeting
- Participated in the Nevada Public Health Authority Advocacy meeting
- Participated in the weekly Consumer Safety, Education, and Health Working Group of the Governor's Task Force for the Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act meeting

#### **Week of April 17**

- Represented SNHD at "Nevada Physician's Day at the Legislature" in Carson City, NV
- Participated in NACCHO Nominations Committee call
- Attended Clark County Medical Society Grand Opening
- Participated in Environmental Health General Staff meeting
- Participated in NACCHO By-Laws meeting
- Met with Mayor Rod Woodbury, City of Boulder City, to discuss issues related to Southern Nevada Health District
- Met with Libby Vianu, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), regarding environmental issues
- Provided media interviews as required
- Participated in Homeland Security Working Group #1 in Carson City, NV
- Participated in Nevada Public Health Association Advocacy Group meeting
- Participated in Big Cities Health Coalition Committee meeting
- Participated in weekly Consumer Safety, Education, and Health Working Group of the Governor's Task Force for the Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act meeting

#### **Week of April 10**

- Met with Nevada Association of Local Health Officials to discuss planning for the upcoming April 28 meeting
- Participated in Board of Health Emergency Preparedness seminar
- Met with Traci Nellis, Manager-Staff and Youth Development, Department of Family Services Independent Living, regarding academic affairs.
- Presented recommendations and follow up for antibiotic stewardship to the Osteopathic Board of Medicine
- Met with City of Mesquite staff regarding clean air initiatives
- Met with Clark County School District staff regarding present/future collaborations
- Participated in NACCHO Executive Committee/Bylaws conference call
- Participated in Clark County Antibioqram conference call
- Met with Dr. Christina Demopoulos and Dr. Ghazal Mofrad (both UNLV) regarding infection control in dental clinics
- Participated in Nevada Public Health Association Advocacy conference call

- Participated in Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) 2017 monthly call
- Participated in weekly Consumer Safety, Education, and Health Working Group of the Governor's Task Force for the Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act meeting

#### Week of April 3

- Presented at the annual April Pools Day Event, sponsored by the Southern Nevada Child Drowning Prevention Coalition
- Provided media updates for National Public Health Week
- Participated in Big Cities Health Coalition Environmental Justice Working Group call
- Participated in the Nevada State Medical Association Legislative Core Group teleconference
- Met with Marijuana working group
- Participated in Nevada Public Health Institute meeting
- Presented at Touro University
- Participated in Nevada Public Health Association meeting
- Participated in Health Officers Association of California Board meeting
- Participated in Nevada Health Authority teleconference
- Participated in Nevada Public Health Association Advocacy meeting
- Met with Marijuana Task Force on packaging
- Met with Dr. Umair Shah, Executive Director, Houston County Public Health regarding matters related to SNHD
- Participated in weekly Consumer Safety, Education, and Health Working Group of the Governor's Task Force for the Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act meeting

#### Week of April 3

- Met with Roseman University staff regarding future academic collaborations
- Participated in the Nevada State Medical Association Legislative Core Group meeting
- Facilitated annual County Health Rankings meeting
- Participated in Nevada Public Health Association Advocacy meeting
- Participated in weekly Consumer Safety, Education, and Health Working Group of the Governor's Task Force for the Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act teleconference
- Participated in teleconference organized by Catherine O'Mara to discuss AB474 (Opioid bill)

# **Marijuana and Southern Nevada Health District's (SNHD) Tobacco Control Program (TCP)**

**May 2017**

## **What is SNHD currently doing to address Marijuana use?**

- Working with partners statewide to advocate for modification of existing tobacco laws (Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act) to limit smoking/vaping of any substance including marijuana indoors.
- Working with local businesses and organizations to adopt voluntary policy that expands on existing law such as limiting the use of electronic vapor products (a popular form of marijuana use is vaping).
- Adding marijuana to Brief Tobacco Use Intervention trainings for healthcare providers.
- Working with healthcare providers to encourage modification of tobacco intake language to include any substance that a patient is smoking or vaping (including marijuana).
- TCP staff attended the PACT coalition's Marijuana Symposium to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue including health concerns.
- Integrated a marijuana component into SNHD's youth tobacco prevention programs.
- Work with large-scale community event organizers to eliminate the smoking/vaping of any substance including marijuana industry presence at the events.

## **Smoke-free apartments:**

The Southern Nevada Health District Tobacco Control Program (TCP) has seen an increase in public complaints related to second-hand marijuana smoke exposure particularly from apartment residents (secondhand smoke drifting into units from vents and balconies). The public often states they didn't know where to call, so they contact the tobacco program since their issue is related to "smoking" of marijuana. The following are some of the resources and assistance we provide to the public in response to the calls mentioned above:

- Clarification on existing Nevada law by explaining that the Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act passed by voters in 2006 only addresses the "smoking of tobacco" in most indoor public places.
- Guidance on how apartment residents can speak to their land lords or management to remedy secondhand smoke exposure.
- Signage and model policy language to apartment managers related to the adoption of smoke-free policies.
- A robust online smoke-free housing directory with over 12,000 units available in Clark County and growing. These are apartment and condo complexes are issuing their own smoke-free policies based on SNHD recommendations.
- Media campaigns that urge apartment managers to adopt smoke-free policies and encourage the public to access our online smoke-free apartment directory.

## **Community partnerships:**

- Dr. Iser serves as a member of Governor Sandoval's Recreational Marijuana Taskforce.
- SNHD collaborates closely with PACT coalition who works throughout southern Nevada on marijuana issues.

- In February 2017, the SNHD TCP was asked to develop a funding proposal to utilize tobacco prevention strategy in addressing marijuana. The proposal was submitted to the State Division of Public and Behavioral Health. We are awaiting a final determination.

### **What could SNHD do with funding and authority to address marijuana use?**

The SNHD TCP is funded primarily by grant funds from federal sources with very strict and narrow scopes of work. Despite this, we have attempted to address the issue of marijuana secondhand smoke exposure.

If a broader focus on marijuana is to be taken we must acquire additional resources in the way of funding and staff to address this issue using evidence-based practices. The following are some of the activities that could be implemented with additional resources:

- Develop mass media campaigns aimed at priority populations.
- Build, launch, and maintain a marijuana education website that is culturally and linguistically targeted to the teen audience. Community, family, and adult marijuana educational pages will be added to the existing [gethealthyclarkcounty.org](http://gethealthyclarkcounty.org) website. Spanish language content could also be developed and maintained.
- Create and maintain social networking pages to reach youth.
- Identify and train youth leaders on a variety of marijuana issues. Youth leaders could share and disseminate education in schools, at community events and via social networking sites.
- Develop and promote an online youth educational module that includes topics on a variety of marijuana issues including myths, edibles, laws, etc. Youth leaders mentioned previously could promote the educational module among their peers through a variety of methods including social media.
- Participate and partner in community events frequented by teens. These outreach educational events could be used to promote the marijuana prevention initiative.
- Maintain, update and expand the multi-unit housing section of program website with educational information for managers and tenants as well as searchable marijuana-free housing directory.
- Convene a local marijuana advisory committee to include experts and stakeholders to foster coordination and collaboration. Coalition involvement will result in shared resources and lend to consistent messaging and activities across the state. Furthermore, it will assist in unified policy developments which can help to maintain clean air objectives.
- Incorporate marijuana use and secondhand smoke exposure into survey instruments.

SNHD TCP staff would be willing to meet to provide an overview of the tobacco issue in southern Nevada as well as to discuss integration of marijuana.