



DATE: May 25, 2023

TO: Southern Nevada District Board of Health Members

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

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

End of the Public Health Emergency

The Southern Nevada Health District held a public briefing on May 11, to discuss the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration. The agency reinforced to the community that the end of the declaration of the public health emergency does not mean the end of the Health District's commitment to providing services or the availability of resources. It also stressed that the declaration ending does not mean the end of COVID-19. The virus is still circulating, still causing illness, hospitalizations and deaths every day. However, there are much better tools to respond to the virus than there were three years ago.

An overview of the current vaccine recommendations was provided as well as updates related to access to vaccines, treatment, testing and surveillance, including changes to cost-sharing arrangements for people with public and private insurance plans that may occur after May 11. Information shared included:

Vaccines and Treatments

- On April 18, the emergency use authorizations for both the Moderna and Pfizer bivalent vaccines were amended to simplify the vaccination schedule for most individuals.
- As a result, the current bivalent vaccines were authorized to be used for all doses administered. The monovalent vaccines are no longer authorized.
- Other important changes to vaccination recommendations include:
 - Most individuals that have never received any COVID-19 vaccine may receive one dose of the bivalent vaccine.
 - Most individuals previously vaccinated with one or more doses of a monovalent vaccine who have not yet received a dose of the bivalent vaccine may receive a single dose of this vaccine.
 - Those 65 years of age and older may receive an additional dose of the vaccine for added protection. This additional dose may be received at least four months following the initial bivalent dose.
 - Most individuals who have already received a bivalent dose are not currently eligible for an additional dose

- Children less than 5 years of age and anyone of any age who is moderately to severely immunocompromised have different vaccination requirements. Those with children and those who are immunocompromised are encouraged to speak with their children's doctor or their own health care provider to learn more.
- It was emphasized that vaccine recommendations will likely be updated in the near future.
- Vaccines are still available for free at Health District clinic locations. Making vaccinations as accessible as possible is an ongoing priority, and vaccination clinics will continue to be available at a variety of locations throughout the year. People are encouraged to check the website at www.snhd.info/covid-vaccine for a list of locations.
- Federally purchased COVID-19 vaccines will remain free to everyone, regardless of insurance coverage. After the federal supply is exhausted, most people will continue to have access to COVID-19 vaccines through public and private insurance, and as always, the Health District remains a safety net for those who otherwise lack access to vaccination.
- Antiviral medications continue to be available at the Southern Nevada Health District and at a number of other locations to patients who meet the criteria for treatment. Most antiviral medications continue to be available for free.

Testing

- While the Health District testing clinic at 280 S. Decatur Blvd. will no longer operate after July 31, its two clinics at the CSN Charleston and Cheyenne campuses will offer PCR testing until March 2024. To date, this program has conducted more than 59,000 tests.
- Six self-test COVID-19 vending machines located at the RTC's Bonneville Transit Center and South Strip Transit Terminal; East Las Vegas Community Center; Fremont Public Health Center; Mesa View Regional Hospital in Mesquite; and the Regional Government Center in Laughlin are currently funded through May of 2024. The project may extend past this date, depending on the number of kits stockpiled.
- These sites offer at-home antigen test kits at no cost to the public, and people can receive five tests per month. To date, the vending program has dispensed over 20,000 kits.

Surveillance

- SARS-CoV-2 continues to circulate in U.S. communities. As of May 9, the US was averaging 11,000 cases a day and 160 deaths a day. Cases are undercounted due to the expanded use of at-home test kits.
- As a result, there is still a lot of virus circulating in communities. The Health District encourages people to keep testing if they have symptoms, if they have had contact with someone who has COVID, or if they will have contact with or will be visiting someone who is at higher risk for severe illness.
- Adjustments have been made to surveillance data and upcoming changes will be driven by alterations in data reporting requirements.
- During the initial stages of the pandemic, Health District staff rapidly gathered and reported valuable data to inform and guide the public health response.
- The reporting methods have been adjusted to respond to the changing nature of the virus, and these activities were integrated into the agency's regular public health practices. The agency will continue to gather, analyze and report relevant COVID-19 data to facilitate informed decision-making as the virus persists and evolves.

- With the increased availability of home COVID-19 tests, relying solely on metrics like daily case counts and percent positivity rate may no longer provide a comprehensive understanding of the community level.
- Moving forward, hospitalization data will be used to monitor community spread, death data will be used to assess the severity of illness in the community, emergency department data will continue to be used as an early warning system and wastewater will be used to track new variants.
- At this time, the agency will continue to provide additional data that is being collected. Currently, the data is posted weekly, but that frequency may change to monthly.
- Some individual reports that were no longer meaningful have already been discontinued and some individual reports that are duplicated on the COVID-19 dashboard may no longer be posted.

Updated COVID-19 information is available on the Health District website at www.SNHD.info/covid.

Increased Incidence of Intracranial Abscesses in Pediatric Patients

In January of this year, the Health District released a Public Health Update to health care providers regarding the increased incidence of intracranial abscesses in pediatric patients that were investigated in 2022. The investigation recently received renewed interest after the topic was presented at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2023 Annual Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer's Conference. For more information on the investigation, access the public health update on the Health District website at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/health-care-professionals/public-health-advisories/.

Mosquito Surveillance Season

The Health District joined with Clark County to kick off the 2023 mosquito surveillance campaign on May 4, calling attention to a potentially early and active mosquito season. SNHD and Clark County are continuing a decades-long partnership in managing mosquitoes throughout Southern Nevada. The agencies work together in setting traps to survey mosquito quantity, species and infected mosquitoes.

During mosquito season, Health District Environmental Health staff set 50 to 60 traps per day for weeks at a time at parks, wash channels, wetland areas and other potential breeding sites across the valley. Hundreds of mosquitoes are captured in the field and transported in coolers to a laboratory at its Main Public Health Center, where they are sorted and cataloged by species and location. The samples are then sent to the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory to test specimens for harmful arboviruses.

The public is urged to Fight the Bite and help reduce the number of mosquitoes, which can carry serious diseases such as the [West Nile](#) and Zika viruses. Fight the Bite calls on people to eliminate standing water, which provides a perfect home for mosquito larvae; prevent mosquito bites by taking [proper precautions](#); and to report mosquito activity to the Health District's surveillance program at (702) 759-1633. To report a green pool, people should contact their local code enforcement agency. More resources and contact information are available on the Health District's [website](#).

West Nile Virus (WNV) reached unprecedented activity in Clark County in 2019, with 43 human cases, including one death. In stark contrast, there was almost no WNV activity in 2020, 2021 and 2022. For more information about mosquito surveillance, visit <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/programs/mosquito-surveillance>.

Soda Free Summer Challenge

The Southern Nevada Health District's Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion is conducting its Soda Free Summer Challenge from May 5 through August 31. The annual campaign encourages children and adults to choose healthier beverages in favor of soda and other sugary drinks. Details on how to participate in the challenge are available at www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org or www.VivaSaludable.org. Interested participants can find the Health District at local events to learn more about the Soda Free Summer Challenge by checking out its [community calendar](#) or Spanish [community calendar](#).

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, sugary drinks account for about 46 percent of the average consumption of added sugars in the U.S. Sugary drinks include sodas, sports drinks and fruit drinks, as well as tea and coffee sweetened with added sugar. Nationally, an estimated six in 10 people aged 18 or older reported having sugary drinks once daily or more. Children consume more than 30 gallons of sugary drinks, on average, every year, enough to fill an entire bathtub.

The largest source of added sugar in most people's diets comes from soda and other sweetened beverages. The daily dietary recommendations per day are approximately 25 to 36 grams of sugar for adults and 25 grams for children. Regular soda, energy drinks and juices have, on average, between 36 to 44 grams of sugar in a 12-ounce can, which translates to between nine and 11 teaspoons of sugar. People are encouraged to limit sugary drinks and opt for healthier alternatives including water, unsweetened tea, and plain milk.

Consumers are advised to read nutrition labels to determine how much added sugar is included in their drinks. For information about how to identify added sugars, visit [Get Healthy Tips for Eating Healthy](#) on the Get Health Clark County website and the Spanish language [Viva Saludable](#) website.

Community Meetings

Week ending 04/30:

Monthly:

- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meeting with Councilwoman Brune, Commissioner Segerblom, Councilwoman Gallo, Mayor Pro Tempore Black, Scott Nielson, Mayor Hardy
- Participated in the Southern Nevada District Board of Health Finance Committee meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada District Board of Health meeting
- Attended the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) Monthly Member Call

Media/Interviews/Panelist/Presenter:

- Presented at the Latin Chamber of Commerce Luncheon

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Ethics: Firearm and Violent Injuries and Deaths in the U.S.” webinar facilitated by the Clark County Medical Society
- Attended the “April NILE Webinar: Importance of Immunization Rate Reporting in Nevada”

Week ending 04/23:

Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

- Participated in the Legislative Working Group meeting

Monthly:

- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Finance Committee meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Governing Board meeting
- Participated in the Clark County Medical Society Board of Trustees meeting
- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meeting with Commissioner Kirkpatrick

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Spotlight on Mental health: The Decriminalization of Suicide” webinar facilitated by The Lancet

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Attended a meeting facilitated by the Catholic Charities on World Refugee Day events

Week ending 04/16:

Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

- Attended the Mpox Briefing facilitated by the HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA)

Monthly:

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

Quarterly:

- Participated in the Public Health Advisory Board meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Quality, Credentialing & Risk Management Committee meeting
- Participated in the Nevada State EMS Advisory Committee meeting

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Community of Practice” webinar facilitated by National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
- Attended the “Listing Session with HHS Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA) on Reproductive Health Care” webinar facilitated by the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC)

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Attended a meeting with Dr. Julio Landero regarding Behavioral Health services
- Attended a COVID-19 AAR Interview by Navis Strategic Services

Week ending 04/09:

Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

- Attended the Legislative Working Group meeting

Annually:

- Participated in the Public Health Week Breakfast for Health District staff

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Attended a meeting with Tami Bruno (Catholic Charities), Jeffrey Tilton (Catholic Charities), Milan Devatek (ECDC – African Community Center), Father Rafael Pereira (All Saints Episcopal Church) regarding refugee services and provided a tour of the Fremont Public Health Center
- Attended a meeting with Future Sync regarding leadership training opportunities

Week ending 04/02:

Annually:

- Attended the 2023 County Health Rankings

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Building Support for Public Health” webinar facilitated by Kaiser Permanente
- Attended the “Expanding Access to Naloxone” webinar facilitated by the FDA

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Attended the discussion on the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) Reauthorization RFI
- Attended a meeting with Commissioner Kirkpatrick regarding Environmental Health funding
- Attended a kick-off meeting with Huron Consulting regarding the Health District’s Strategic Plan

Week ending 03/26:

Weekly:

- Attended the Legislative Working Group meeting

Monthly:

- Participated in the individual Southern Nevada District Board of Health Agenda Review meeting with Mayor Pro Tempore Black, Scott Nielson, Councilwoman Gallo, Councilwoman Nancy Brune, Mayor Hardy
- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Finance Committee meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center Governing Board meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada District Board of Health Finance Committee meeting
- Participated in the Southern Nevada District Board of Health meeting
- Attended the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) Monthly Member call

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “CDC Response All STLT Update Call re COVID-19 and Mpox” webinar facilitated by the CDC

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Facilitated the New Board of Health Member Orientation for Councilwoman Brune and Councilwoman Gallo
- Participated in a meeting with the Mayor Michelle Romero, representatives of the City of Henderson, Bradley Mayer, and Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Black regarding funding for the Southern Nevada Public Health Lab (SNPHL) expansion
- Attended the City of North Las Vegas State of the City

Week ending 03/19:

Weekly:

- Attended the Legislative Working Group meeting

Quarterly:

- Attended the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) meeting
- Nevada Primary Care Association (NAPCA) Finance Committee meeting

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Exploring the New Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) Capacity and Cost Assessment” webinar series facilitated by the Public Health National Center for Innovations (PHNCI) at the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB)

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Meeting with the Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada regarding Refugee Providers and Community Consultation

Week ending 03/05:

Bi-weekly (every two weeks):

- Attended the Mpox Briefing facilitated by the HHS Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA)

Quarterly:

- Participated in the State Board of Health meeting

Professional Development/Conferences:

- Attended the “Latest Update on Urgent Virus Outbreaks” webinar

Ad-hoc Meetings/Events:

- Attended the Winter 2023 In-Person Member Meeting facilitated by the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC)
- Attended a visit to Capitol Hill with BCHC and NACCHO member leadership