



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 30, 2007

**National Public Health Week is all about preparedness
April 2-8**

LAS VEGAS – The American Public Health Association's (APHA) 12th annual National Public Health Week kicks off Monday, April 2. This year's theme, "Take the first step! Preparedness and public health threats: addressing the unique needs of the nation's vulnerable populations," reflects the continued need to address public health preparedness across the country.

A recent poll conducted by Maris College Institute for Public Opinion found that just 31 percent of Americans had an emergency plan in place. The percentage of those who have plans in place drops among groups considered to be more vulnerable populations, such as individuals with chronic medical conditions or hourly-wage workers who may not have personal leave or employer-sponsored health plans.

In recognition of National Public Health Week, the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) is urging the public to assess their unique needs and take the time to plan accordingly for an unexpected disaster or emergency situation.

"This year's theme embodies the preparedness goals of the health district and the activities of our office of public health preparedness very well," said Dr. Lawrence Sands, the health district's chief health officer. "In 2005 in Louisiana and Mississippi, we saw that the region's more vulnerable residents were hit particularly hard by the storms. Government and health officials found that these individuals' health conditions, mobility issues, disabilities or other special needs were not addressed well enough in emergency planning."

The health district's office of public health preparedness is addressing the unique issues of individuals with special needs by working with advocacy groups and community organizations to determine how to assist their clients in an emergency. The health district actively promotes advance planning and preparedness activities as the most effective way to lessen the effect of an emergency.

"The health district advises and educates individuals and families with special needs on how to develop personal preparedness plans. They must consider their own unique challenges to ensure the health and safety of family members with special needs," said Sands.

-more-

CONTACTS

Jennifer Sizemore: Sizemore@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1225
Stephanie Bethel: Bethel@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1393

National Public Health Week – add one

Recently, a national survey of 409 adults with chronic illnesses found that just 19 percent of adults who take medications more than once per week have a one-month supply of their prescriptions on hand. The US Census notes that by 2010, there will be more than 350,000 Clark County residents with disabilities.

“Emergency preparedness can be achieved by taking just a few steps at a time,” said Sands. “With a little planning, a family can have its supplies and its plan in place in a reasonably short period of time.”

For more information about emergency preparedness and planning activities go the health district website, www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org or call the health district, (702) 759-1000. Visit www.nphaonline.org to take the Nevada Public Health Association’s preparedness quiz.