



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health District advises of a seventh acute hepatitis C case

LAS VEGAS - The Southern Nevada Health District has preliminary information regarding an acute case of hepatitis C in a patient who received a procedure at the Desert Shadow Endoscopy Center at 4275 Burnham Avenue in Las Vegas. The health district is continuing its investigation of the potential case and will determine its next steps based on that investigation.

The seventh identified case was diagnosed in 2006, but never reported to the health district. Based on the preliminary investigation the patient had been tested for hepatitis C, as part of a routine health screening, just prior to undergoing the procedure at the endoscopy center and the test was negative. The patient was diagnosed with acute hepatitis C several weeks after the procedure and within the incubation period for developing the illness. The health district advised the Clark County Commission of the potential case as the commission considered extending the limitations on the clinic's business license.

"Our investigation is continuing regarding this potential case and we currently do not have enough information to determine what type of notification is required," said Dr. Lawrence Sands, chief health officer. "We advised the Commission because we believe it is important information and should be taken into consideration as the clinic's business license is debated." The patient received a procedure at the location in June 2006.

The health district is stressing this is an ongoing investigation and further information is needed in order to determine the extent of the patient notification. Patients who are concerned about procedures at other clinics should discuss their need for testing with their personal physician.

"Our goal is to notify patients that may have been exposed to bloodborne illnesses in a timely manner. However, we need to review clinic records in order to determine how many patients may have been exposed due to unsafe injection practices. We will continue to make informed recommendations to the public based on identified risk, verified by the findings of our epidemiologic investigations," said Dr. Sands.

The Southern Nevada Health District continues to update information on its website, including patient and physician information at www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org. In addition, the health district has set up a hotline at (702) 759-4636 (INFO).