



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### Health District names Public Health Heroes

LAS VEGAS -The Southern Nevada Health District today announced its annual Public Health Heroes, recognition given to individuals or organizations whose efforts positively affect the health and well-being of the community. This year's winners were honored at the April 24 Southern Nevada District Board of Health meeting.

The 2008 Public Health Heroes are:

#### George Botta

Botta, a certified pest control operator, alerted health district environmental health specialists about a public health hazard at a food warehouse. The warehouse contracted with the company that employs Botta for pest control services. When Botta responded to the call he noted there was significant roach and rodent infestation. He alerted the health district and provided information regarding the facility. The health district immediately responded and determined the facility did not have a health permit or a business license. Because of Botta's actions health district staff was able to notify food establishments not to accept any products from the warehouse, supervised the destruction of approximately 22 tons of tainted food products, and witnessed the destruction of compromised food product that had been delivered to other restaurant facilities. Botta's initiative to report the unsanitary conditions at this facility helped to eliminate the potential for food borne illnesses in the community.

#### Mike Cushman

Cushman has worked to become one of the industry leaders in the prevention and control of norovirus outbreaks in Southern Nevada. Cushman expanded upon health district guidelines for hotels and casinos to prevent and control norovirus outbreaks. His work lead to an expansion of the health district guidelines and his recommendations have been adopted as local industry standards.

During a 2007 norovirus outbreak at the Clark County Detention Center, health district staff suggested the detention center contact Cushman for additional guidance on environmental control strategies. In response, Cushman provided guidance but also arrived at the detention center with the equipment needed to conduct a thorough environmental response. He worked along side detention center staff throughout the night until the entire facility had been cleaned.

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## Public Health Heroes – add one

Coach Lon Kruger, University of Nevada Las Vegas

Kruger was recognized for his role in the development of The Coach's Challenge, a new program implemented by the health district in 63 elementary schools, including 530 classrooms and more than 14,500 children. The program encourages elementary school children to eat healthy and be physically active. Kruger attended planning meetings, visited classrooms, wrote letters about the importance of physical activity and nutrition to students who participated in the program, and contributed UNLV resources including 500 tickets to a UNLV game and posters for each of the participating classrooms.

John Willian, Venetian/Venezia and Palazzo

Willian, safety manager for the Venetian/Venezia and Palazzo, has promoted hepatitis B vaccination for staff members and as a result almost 1,000 of his colleagues have received the vaccine. In addition he has implemented a requirement that members of housekeeping, guest services, priority services and meeting services obtain a health card from the health district, which is now a condition of employment for these positions. He shares his "real-world" knowledge with engineering students about safety issues at resort properties and how those relate to the field of engineering. He also provides students with information about the role of safety programs and chemical, biological and other emergency situations.

This year's awardees have all shown tremendous initiative to ensure the conditions necessary to protect the health of Southern Nevada residents and visitors. All are well-deserving recipients of the Public Health Hero Awards.

Public Health Heroes are nominated by health district staff members for their efforts in supporting one or more of the 10 Essential Public Health Services:

1. Monitor the health status to identify and solve community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure competent public and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solution to health problems.

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