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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Clark County Health District Promotes Awareness as the World Observes Tuberculosis Day

(Las Vegas, Nev. – March 22, 1999) – World Tuberculosis Day will be observed on March 24, 1999. It commemorates the first successful isolation of the TB bacilli by Robert Koch in 1882. Today, while there are effective tools and medicines to cure TB, the disease still rages worldwide, killing 3 million people annually.

In Clark County 103 new active cases of tuberculosis were reported in 1998, with over 50 percent of these cases being foreign born. In order to address the difficulties of treating a very diverse clientele the Clark County Health District's (CCHD's) TB Treatment and Control Clinic has developed a comprehensive program that helps the District ensure that each person with an active case receives the proper medications.

Measures taken by CCHD include having public health nurses take medication into the homes of patients who find it difficult to travel to the clinic, placing homeless people with active TB in residential care, and providing bus tokens or a means of transportation for those who are able to travel.

Symptoms of this disease include a cough lasting three weeks or more, loss of appetite, weight loss, night sweats, fatigue, low-grade temperatures (usually in the afternoon) and

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coughing up blood. Any person exhibiting these symptoms should seek medical attention immediately. Tuberculosis can be cured. It is treated with medications and the treatment usually lasts from six months to one year.

Effective anti-TB drugs are readily available, however they are often used improperly. Incomplete treatment leads not only to failure to cure the disease, but can result in multi-drug resistant strains. Currently, multi-drug resistant strains of TB can cost as much as \$250,000 per patient to treat.

Cooperation from local agencies and physicians has allowed Clark County's TB Treatment and Control Clinic to be very successful in treating active disease in Clark County. Anyone interested in obtaining more information can call (702) 383-1369.

THE FACTS ABOUT TUBERCULOSIS:

- Tuberculosis is the oldest known infectious disease.
- Worldwide, TB kills more people than any other infectious disease.
- Globally, every second at least one person is infected with TB.
- Globally, every 10 seconds some one dies of TB.
- TB kills more people around the world each year than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.
- Thirty-three percent of all HIV/AIDS deaths are due to TB.
- One contagious person, on average, can infect 10 to 15 people with TB each year.
- Two billion people worldwide are infected with the TB germ.
- Two hundred million of those infected individuals will develop active disease during their lifetime.
- One hundred thousand children die of TB each year – frequently from brain or spinal cord TB.
- TB kills more women than all causes of maternal mortality combined.

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