

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health District Receives Confirmation of Norovirus in Flamingo Hotel Illness

(Las Vegas, Nev., - October 26, 2004) - The Clark County Health District received confirmation of norovirus in specimens collected from ill guests and employees of the Flamingo Las Vegas. The confirmation follows previous tests which ruled out any bacterial (as opposed to viral) cause of illness. The cluster of gastrointestinal illness was originally reported to the health district on Wednesday, October 20 by Flamingo Las Vegas staff.

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that affect the gastrointestinal tract, causing vomiting, diarrhea, nausea and abdominal cramps. These symptoms differ from those caused by influenza (flu) and are not considered to be flu-like. Influenza affects the respiratory system, causing symptoms like fever, muscle aches, headache congestion, runny nose, cough and sore throat. There has been no incidence of flu in Clark County this season.

Norovirus is highly contagious and easily spread from person to person through direct contact with an ill person or a surface contaminated by the virus. The best defense against illness is proper handwashing - especially after using the restroom and before eating.

Health district epidemiologists (disease detectives) are currently investigating and compiling reports of illness. Additionally, health district environmental health staff is working with the Flamingo Las Vegas on disinfection and heightened-sanitation procedures. Due to the nature of norovirus, staff may not be able to determine an exact point of introduction into the hotel.

Additional information on noroviruses is available at the health district website at <http://www.cchd.org/download/epi/norovirus.pdf> Guests or visitors of the Flamingo Las Vegas wishing to report illness may contact the Clark County Health District Office of Epidemiology (702) 759-1296.

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