



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 1, 2010

Compassionate Response toolkit now available for hepatitis C patients, families

LAS VEGAS - The Southern Nevada Health District and the HONORreform Foundation today announced the availability of the Compassionate Response toolkit, a guide for patients with hepatitis C and their families. The kit is available via the HONORreform Foundation website, www.honoreform.org. Copies can also be requested by contacting the health district's office of chronic disease prevention and health promotion, (702) 759-1270.

The Compassionate Response toolkit is a resource for patients who were diagnosed with hepatitis C and their families. The kit includes educational information about hepatitis, resources and information about treatment and recovery, emotional aspects of living with hepatitis and its stigma, as well as resources to locate support groups and services in the Las Vegas Valley.

The health district and HONORreform Foundation partnered with Dianne Travers-Gustafson, an adjunct associate professor at Creighton University's school of nursing, and her senior nursing students to develop the information.

The project, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), was developed in response to an outbreak of hepatitis C at two Southern Nevada endoscopy centers. In 2008, the Southern Nevada Health District notified close to 60,000 former patients of their potential exposure to hepatitis C and recommended they receive testing for hepatitis B, C and HIV. Nine cases were identified as directly linked to the clinics and 106 cases were considered possibly linked to the clinics.

"The outbreak caused quite a bit of anxiety in our community as we notified so many people and recommended they get tested," said Dr. Lawrence Sands, the health district's chief health officer. "It is possible that many people discovered that they are infected with hepatitis C and although the source of their infection cannot be identified, this toolkit offers them important information to help them manage their health."

-more-

Compassionate Response toolkit – add one

HONORreform (Hepatitis Outbreaks National Organization for Reform) is an organization founded by Dr. Evelyn McKnight, a Nebraska audiologist who contracted hepatitis C from a medical clinic. HONORreform works to ensure safe injection practices across the country. In Nevada, HONORreform has helped launch a pilot education program for patients and healthcare providers regarding safe injection practices. HONORreform is a founding member of the Safe Injection Practices Coalition (SIPC), a group of patient advocacy organizations, foundations, provider associations, healthcare industry partners and the CDC that focuses on promoting safe injection practices in healthcare settings. The coalition is especially concerned with the reuse of syringes and the misuse of single-use and multiple-use vials of medication. The coalition launched the One and Only Campaign in early 2010.

"We are delighted to be able to provide much needed resources and information to those affected by the Las Vegas outbreak," said Dr. Evelyn McKnight, founder HONORreform. "The toolkit is a comprehensive guide for dealing with the life changing event of being diagnosed with viral hepatitis. Las Vegas are the first to have access to the toolkit and we look forward to providing it for anyone who needs it across the country."

Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict, on YouTube www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict or Twitter : www.twitter.com/SNHInfo.