



DATE: May 23, 2019

TO: Southern Nevada District Board of Health Members

FROM: Joseph Iser, MD, DrPH, MSc, Chief Health Officer

SUBJECT: Chief Health Officer Report

Influenza Update

Influenza surveillance for Clark County, Nevada includes data collected from local acute care hospitals and other health care providers. During week 18 (April 28-May 4), influenza activity continues to decrease in the United States. In Nevada, the geographic spread of influenza was regional, and influenza-like illness activity (ILI) was minimal. In Clark County, 950 influenza-associated hospitalizations have been reported, with 64 percent being people 50 years of age or older. There have been 36 influenza-associated deaths reported, including three deaths in children under the age of 18. The proportion of emergency room and urgent care clinic visits for ILI was 2.4 percent in week 18 which was slightly lower than week 17 (2.5 percent). Approximately 53 percent of area emergency room and urgent care clinic visits for ILI were made by children under 18 years of age. Influenza A was the dominant type circulating. The Southern Nevada Health District will continue to update the public on the flu season and encourage people to get vaccinated.

Health District influenza surveillance updates are available at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/statistics-surveillance-reports/influenza-surveillance/

Mosquito Surveillance

The Health District's Mosquito Surveillance Program monitors the local mosquito populations for arboviruses such as West Nile, St. Louis Encephalitis, and Western Equine Encephalitis. The program also provides information on the types of mosquitoes present in Clark County. Arboviral diseases in humans are reportable to the Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance (OEDS). Currently, West Nile virus and St. Louis Encephalitis are the only locally acquired arboviral diseases that have been reported to the Health District. Sporadic travel-associated cases of dengue, chikungunya, and Zika virus have been investigated by the office.

In April, the Health District reported the first West Nile virus case of 2019. The individual, a female over the age of 50, had the more serious neuroinvasive form of the illness and has recovered. There were no reported human cases of West Nile virus in Clark County last year.

As of May 10, the Health District's Mosquito Surveillance Program has set 389 traps throughout Clark County and submitted 195 testing pools, representing 3,072 mosquitoes to the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory for analysis. All results received have been negative.

The Health District continues to urge the public to "Fight the Bite" by eliminating standing water around their home, preventing mosquito bites by wearing an EPA-registered repellent, and reporting mosquito activity to the Health District by calling (702) 759-1633. More information on the Health District's Mosquito Surveillance activities is available on its website at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/programs/mosquito-surveillance/. For additional information and prevention tips visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov/features/stopmosquitoes/index.html.

Harm Reduction

In 2017, more than [47,000 people in the United States](#) died from overdosing on opioids, and in Nevada, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Analytics reports that there were 401 opioid-related overdose deaths. A [new study](#) recently estimated that the federal tax revenue lost to the opioid epidemic totals \$26 billion, nationally. Diseases related to drug use have also surged, with [Hepatitis C increasing 133 percent](#) between 2004 and 2014, tracking with the growth of opioid injection hospital admissions.

In April 2017, the Health District and Trac-B Exchange collaborated with community partners to launch a first of its kind harm reduction initiative aimed at preventing the spread of infectious diseases associated with syringe use and disposal. This was accomplished using a novel method: vending machines. Harm reduction vending machines are used to dispense packages of clean syringes, as well as safe sex kits, and more. The vending pilot program expands on more than [20 years of data](#) that show syringe service (or needle exchange) programs and traditional storefront models are effective in preventing the spread of deadly diseases like HIV or hepatitis C. The success of the program can be attributed to the efforts of Health District staff working with the Harm Reduction Center Las Vegas, Trac-B Exchange, and the Nevada AIDS Research and Education Society (NARES).

In the first year of operations, nearly 300 unique accounts had at least one syringe vending machine transaction, and there were a total of 2,712 vending machine transactions. A total of 2,354 syringe kits were distributed by the vending machines, equaling 23,540 syringes distributed. The majority of clients were male (67%), white (79%), non-Hispanic (85%), and between 21 and 34 years old (52%). Syringe vending machine use appeared to be more frequent among people experiencing homelessness - compared to people who were housed, and those who were homeless had a higher average number of transactions. Currently, clients have access to three machines in Southern Nevada. About a quarter of clients requested a hepatitis C or an HIV test, and 10 percent requested education about either of these diseases, with 5 percent seeking a referral for drug treatment. About a quarter also said they were sharing needles and about a third said they were sharing other injection equipment, illustrating how important clean paraphernalia can be for stopping the spread of disease through injection drug use. Finally, nearly half of the clients requested naloxone, and 70 percent of them said they had someone they could trust to help should an overdose occur.

2019 Legislative Session

The Health District is monitoring proposed legislation that would have a direct impact on the agency, would serve to promote public health in the community, or would impact services, programs, or funding. Status for bills of interest to the Health District include:

AB317 - Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services

Summary: Revises provisions governing the licensing and operation of certain medical facilities. (BDR 40-1034)

Revises provisions governing the approval of trauma centers. As amended, trauma designation in Clark County would be reversed. The Division of Public and Behavioral Health would conduct a needs assessment. Once the state establishes a need, the District Board of Health would then consider trauma designation.

This bill as amended was heard on May 13. There is widespread support from the Culinary Union and hospitals for revising the process to allow for the state to conduct a needs assessment. Testimony presented still includes the Health District and Board of Health in the regulatory and designation process.

SB171 - Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor

Summary: Provides for the collection of information from certain providers of health care. (BDR 54-73)

SB171 would require laboratories to report chronic disease markers to the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health. The Southern Nevada Health District is supporting a proposed amendment that would exclude rural areas and Carson City from reporting requirements.

SB263 - Senate Committee on Revenue and Economic Development

Summary: Revises provisions relating to the regulation and taxation of certain vapor products and tobacco products. (BDR 32-700)

SB263 proposes to bring vapor products under the existing tax structure of other tobacco products. The bill will be heard in a joint meeting of the Senate Revenue and Economic Development and Assembly Taxation Committee. Amendments may include retail enforcement language and direct funding towards prevention activities.

SB418 - Senate Health and Human Service

Summary: Revises provisions governing the distribution and sale of raw milk. (BDR 51-1073)

The bill is currently in the Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services. Local and state public health officials have been meeting with the committee chair and bill sponsors to express their concerns with the health implications of this bill. To date, no additional hearings have been scheduled.

Community Meetings

Week of April 29

- Participated in the Exercise and Review of Nevada's Crisis Standards of Care Plan, sponsored by the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, Public Health Preparedness Program
- Participated in the Nevada Public Health Institute meeting
- Discussed potential membership in the National Network of Public Health Institutes
- Participated in the Medical Advisory Board meeting
- Provided media interviews as requested
- Participated in the Nevada Health Authority Conference call
- Attended the 21st Annual Silver Syringe Awards and Fundraiser with SNHD award recipients
- Participated in the Nevada Public Health Authority Advocacy and Policy Committee meeting
- Provided independent research on behalf of Clark County for a George Washington University HIV epidemic project

Week of April 22

- Met with Julia Peek, Deputy Administrator, NDPBH regarding SB418 Proposed Regulatory Considerations (Raw Milk)
- Participated in the Facilities Advisory Board meeting
- Met with April LaLone, Regional Representative, U.S. Senator Jacky Rosen, regarding matters related to SNHD
- Participated in Residency Program Site Visit
- Presented information regarding the SNHD Syringe Vending Machine Initiative to the City of Tonopah Commission
- Participated in the NPHA Advocacy and Policy Committee meeting

Week of April 15

- Participated in the NACCHO Nominations Committee meeting to confirm the 2019 candidates
- Participated in the NACCHO ByLaws meeting
- Participated in the NACCHO Finance Committee Monthly meeting
- Participated in the Local Health Authorities preparatory meeting to discuss the local health jurisdiction response to and input regarding the Advisory Council on the State Programs for Wellness and the Prevention of Chronic Disease to be held on April 18
- Hosted Syphilis Awareness Day at SNHD
- Provided media interviews as requested
- Participated in the Clark County Medical Society Board of Trustees meeting
- Participated in the Regional Trauma Advisory Board (RTAB) meeting
- Participated in the Planning Call for Nevada TB/STD Training
- Participated in the Nevada State Medical Association Public Health Commission meeting
- Participated in the Nevada Public Health Association Advocacy and Policy Committee meeting

Week of April 8

- Participated in informational call for local jurisdictions eligible to apply to CDC's Overdose Data to Action notice of funding opportunity
- Met with Jay Butler, CDC regarding ELC
- Participated in Nevada Association of Local Health Officers teleconference
- Met with the HRSA Regional Director John Moroney regarding HRSA
- Participated in Big Cities Health Coalition Monthly Call meeting

Week of April 1

- Met with Dr. Ramu Komanduri, Chief of Staff, Veteran's Administration, regarding the Preventive Medicine Residency
- Participated in the Nevada Public Health Institute meeting
- Provided facility tour for UNLV School of Dental Medicine staff
- Participated in Nevada Health Authority Conference call
- Participated in Nevada Public Health Institute Strategic Planning session