



**DATE:** April 23, 2020

**TO:** Southern Nevada District Board of Health Members

**FROM:** Fermin Leguen, MD, MPH, Acting Chief Health Officer *FL*

**SUBJECT:** Chief Health Officer Report

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### 2019 Novel Coronavirus Update

Southern Nevada Health District staff members continue to respond to reports of positive cases, provide public health testing through the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory, work with community partners and service providers to respond to cases in community settings, manage and distribute PPE to health care facilities, first responders and health care professionals, provide information to the public and stakeholders, and many more response-related activities.

Daily case counts as well as updated information are available on the Health District website at [www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/coronavirus](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/coronavirus).

The Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory has expanded its testing capacity and can now process approximately 200 specimens a day. Additionally, the Health District has received eight Abbott rapid testing machines. It will keep three machines for use in the Southern Nevada Community Health Center and at outreach sites, one has been distributed to UMC, and the remaining four will be distributed to community federally qualified health centers.

The Health District also issues updated guidance or distributes information as additional resources become available or recommendations evolve based on this dynamic situation.

The Health District announced a new text and email-based notification system to assist in notifying individuals who have traveled to areas where transmission of COVID-19 is widespread, or who are contacts of a confirmed case. This new system allows people who have a known exposure but are at lower risk to receive an important notification so they can take steps to monitor their health and contact the Health District if they have questions or concerns. When a person receives an alert, they are advised based on their specific circumstances to monitor their symptoms and, if applicable, self-quarantine for 14 days. The system provides links to instructions, the declaration of quarantine, and resources for individuals.

Health District staff is continuing to look for resources and solutions to manage the outbreak and provide the community with information. This notification system will allow people who are not sick but may be at risk for becoming ill to take additional precautions to help keep themselves and others healthy.

The Health District has also updated its guidance regarding the use of cloth face coverings in public settings to align with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). Recent studies suggest that many individuals with coronavirus infection can transmit the virus before they develop symptoms. Other individuals may not develop symptoms at all but may still be able to transmit the virus. This means that the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity – for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing – even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms. The Health District recommends that members of the public wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies).

Maintaining social distancing (staying at least 6-feet away from other people) remains the most important method of slowing the spread of the virus. Cloth face coverings made from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure. The cloth face coverings mentioned in these recommendations are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. These are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for health care workers and other medical first responders.

The Health District continues to reinforce social media and prevention messages for the public including:

- Avoid all non-essential travel and social interactions.
- Work from home, when possible, and do not gather in groups.
- Stay at least 6 feet apart from others.
- Persons 50+ years old and those who have chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, or a weakened immune system are most at risk.
- Stay home, local community transmission is common, and if you are sick, you must stay home.

Adjustments have been made to Health District services during the response. Updated information is available at [www.SNHD.info](http://www.SNHD.info).

### **2019-2020 Influenza Season Update**

Influenza activity in the United States is now low. During week 15 (April 5, 2020 – April 11, 2020), influenza-like illness (ILI) activity was minimal in Nevada. In Clark County, 1,367 influenza-associated hospitalizations and 46 influenza-related deaths, including one pediatric death, were reported to the Health District since the beginning of the current influenza season. The proportion of emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for ILI was 3.3 percent in week 15, which was lower than week 14 (4.4 percent). Approximately 46.4 percent of area emergency department and urgent care clinic visits for ILI were made by adults 18-44 years of age. Influenza A has become the dominant type circulating.

The Southern Nevada Health District's Office of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance began its 2019-2020 influenza season surveillance activities on Oct. 1, 2019, and will continue through May 16, 2020. Weekly surveillance reports are available on the Health District website at [www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/statistics-surveillance-reports/influenza-surveillance/](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/statistics-surveillance-reports/influenza-surveillance/).

## **World TB Day**

March 24 was World TB Day. The day may have been overshadowed by the COVID-19 outbreak and ongoing response; however, it is important to note the ongoing impact of the disease. According to the CDC, there were 9,025 cases of TB in the United States in 2018, and it's estimated that there are as many as 13 million people living with latent TB infection (LTBI). In Clark County, cases of TB continue to be identified. In 2018, there were 59 cases reported in the county.

Once one of the leading causes of death in the United States, TB cases are declining; however, they still occur, and TB can be fatal if not treated. As the leading provider of TB services in Southern Nevada, the Health District's Tuberculosis Treatment and Control Clinic offers services to ensure people with active TB disease are treated and that people who are exposed to TB are evaluated and treated, if appropriate, to prevent the further spread of the disease. In addition to testing and treatment, staff members provide specialized case management services to assure that patients with active and suspect TB disease receive individualized patient care. Directly observed therapy (DOT) is the standard of care to promote adherence to and completion of TB treatment, and it is offered to active and suspect TB patients.

More information about the Health District's TB Treatment and Control Clinic is available at [www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/community-health-center/tuberculosis-treatment-control-clinic/](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/community-health-center/tuberculosis-treatment-control-clinic/).

