



# We Are

# HEALTH EQUITY

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*The Southern Nevada Health District's Health Equity Program was established with the goal of working alongside community partners to help increase awareness of, and minimize, the health inequities that hinder marginalized communities from reaching their full health potential.*

*The program's mission is to work in collaboration with Health District programs and community-based organizations to reduce disparities in health care access and service delivery to underserved populations using health equity strategies, increasing access to essential services, providing education and conducting community outreach.*

[Click here to view the Health Equity Webpage](#)

## We Are Health Equity

The Health Equity program is grateful to work alongside community organizations to support communities most impacted by COVID-19 and other health inequities. Our partners work diligently to provide services, education and other resources to a multitude of populations in Southern Nevada, including:

- Hispanic/Latinx
- Black/African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- People experiencing homelessness
- LGBTQ community
- Members of the Islamic community
- Immigrants and refugees
- Seniors 65+
- Low- to moderate-income households
- Medically underserved
- People with disabilities

Our partners are well-versed in the communities they serve and are trusted to be a resource for underserved populations. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has been the concentration of our collaboration, the collective goals of our partnerships are focused on increasing overall access to health and closing the gap between health disparities and those underserved populations.

## Our Partners



## HEALTH EQUITY HIGHLIGHT

### Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15 to October 15, is celebrated nationwide as National Hispanic Heritage Month. It traditionally honors the cultures and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino Americans as we celebrate heritage rooted in all Latin American countries. The observation began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988.

The culture of these groups is very diverse, and how people identify is more than a definition—it's a combination of heritage, origin, country and culture. Here are some useful explanations to help you understand why someone may identify as Hispanic, Latino(a), Latinx or Spanish.

**Hispanic** refers to someone from or with ancestors from Spain, Mexico, Central America and South America and cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. Brazilians are not considered Hispanic, however, because they speak Portuguese.

**Latino(a)** refers to the geographic origin of someone. Latinos are from or have ancestors from Latin America which includes Mexico, Central America and South America. In this case, Brazilians are considered Latino, but people from Spain are not.

**Latinx** is a gender-neutral neologism, sometimes used instead of Latino or Latina to refer to people of Latin American cultural or racial identity in the United States.

**Spanish** refers to a language or someone from Spain.



Highlighting the achievements of Hispanic and Latinx individuals who have eliminated barriers in the sciences, and medicine.



Photo Credit: NASA, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

**Dr. Serena Auñón-Chancellor** is the first Hispanic physician to travel to space, having spent six months in 2018 working on research aboard the International Space Station (ISS), including studying cancer and Parkinson's disease. Here on Earth, she has been treating COVID-19 patients in Louisiana.



Photo Credit: The Kresge Foundation

**Dr. Jane Delgado** began her career as a psychologist who promoted minority health at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In 1985, Delgado made essential contributions to the first-ever public report outlining racial and ethnic health disparities: Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health. She went on to serve as the first woman president of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health (NAHH), advocating for the health of Hispanic and Latinx communities

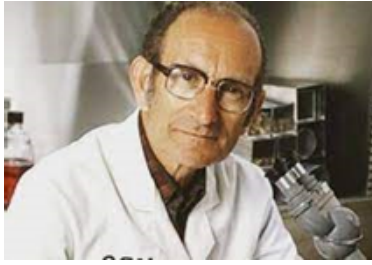


Photo Credit: Observer Voice

**Caesar Milstein** was born in Argentina in 1923, and he won the Nobel Prize in 1975 for his study on monoclonal antibodies and how they can help in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. He is one of the most important Latino scientists of all time!

While the discovery was a novelty during his time, it is still relevant to this day, especially with the global pandemic of COVID-19. His technique for mass production of monoclonal antibodies is used to create lab versions of proteins that the humans can produce naturally to protect themselves against viruses and pathogens. His theory and work were considered to find short-term protection for the virus.

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## Sexual Health Awareness Month

September is sexual health awareness month. Our sexual health is one piece of our health that many of us may not consider often, or we may neglect due to stigma around the topic. However, much like our general physical and mental health, sexual health affects our well-being. Sexual health can include a lot of things and may not look the same for every person. Whether it is using methods (such as condoms) to protect yourself from sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs), scheduling a check-up with your doctor when you have questions or concerns, educating yourself on various sexual health services available, getting tested for STIs as needed, or discussing sexual consent, needs, boundaries, and desires with partners. However it relates to you, it is important to think about what sexual health means and looks like for you.

When discussing sexual health care and family planning services, we must acknowledge limitations in access for populations who face social barriers. Often, social factors such as social context and support, sexual orientation and gender identity, economic status, health care coverage and age can stand as barriers to accessing STI testing and treatment, preventive care, and educational information. According to the 2021 Nevada High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) State Report, 25.2% of overall high school students answered yes to ever having sexual intercourse. About 69.5% stated they did not use birth control pills, an IUD implant, a shot, patch, or birth control ring before their last sexual intercourse, and 51% stated they did not use a condom during their last sexual intercourse. Around this time, between 2019 and 2022, Nevada was one of many states affected by cuts in Title X funding. Title X



funding provided access to family planning, birth control, preventive care, STI testing and treatment for low-income, uninsured, or otherwise marginalized populations. Without access to these services, sexual and reproductive health disparities may persist among marginalized populations.

However, Senate Bill 172 was introduced in February 2023 and approved in June 2023 to help fill some of the accessibility gaps of sexual health care for young adults. The bill authorizes a minor to give consent to an examination or treatment if they are suspected of being infected or are infected with any sexually transmitted disease and states that a minor must consent before such examination or treatment is provided. Additionally, it authorizes a minor to give consent to certain medical health care providers to provide services for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases or the prescribing, dispensing or administration of a contraceptive drug or device without the consent or notification of a parent, parents, or legal guardian.

Young adults, let alone those in marginalized communities, are exposed to vague or limited sexual education and have less capabilities to access sexual health services that can help prevent STIs and youth pregnancy. In addition, many minors in marginalized communities may not have trusted adults who they feel will support their overall health or provide them with tools to make informed decisions. This bill offers better access to sexual health care and overall promotes the advancement of health equity withing marginalized communities.

#### Sexual Health Awareness Resources:

- [SNHD Sexual Health Clinic](#)
- [Let's Talk About Sexual Health Awareness](#)
- [2021 Nevada High School YRBS State Report](#)
- [SB 172](#)

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## Tap Into Health

**Navigating Back-to-School for students experiencing developmental/intellectual disabilities**

In the United States, the CDC estimates about one in six, or about 17% of children aged 3 through 17 have one more developmental disability. Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, language, learning or behavior areas. These conditions start during the developmental period, can impact day-to-day functioning, and often last throughout an individual's lifetime.

Section 504 under the American federal regulation requires school districts to offer students with disabilities educational services that provide support and are suitable for their needs. School 504 plans are developed to try to eliminate barriers for any student with a disability to ensure academic success and access to the learning environment. For example, students covered under a 504 plan can receive accommodations like extended time on tests or assignments, peer assistance with note taking, enlarged print, behavior intervention plans, etc. depending on their needs.

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). An IEP tracks a student's academic and functional performance with specialized instructions and goals on how to keep them on track. For a family to get an IEP for their child, the child must be tested for a learning disability, autism, ADHD, or others. Every three years the child is reevaluated to determine if services given to the student are still needed. In addition to these plans, there are several resources in Clark County to assist families with early intervention services to address developmental delays:

- [Nevada Early Intervention Services \(NEIS\)](#) provides services to children birth until three with developmental delay or disabilities, and their families.
- [Child Find](#) is an evaluative process to locate and evaluate children, ages 3-21, who may have a disability and are eligible for services as identified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- [Nevada PEP](#) serves families of children and youth with disabilities and behavioral health needs from birth to 26.
- [The Parenting Project](#) in Clark County offers a series of free programs for parents to help them learn effective parenting skills.

These resources and programs exist to help achieve equity for all students. Many students could be pushed through school or left behind without them. For students to achieve equity we must meet them where they are to provide them with the opportunity to be more successful in school, participate in their communities throughout their lives, and achieve all they set out to do.

## SELF CARE CORNER

### September is National Suicide Awareness Month

Suicide is an uncomfortable topic to discuss, and one that should be discussed openly and honestly. To help raise awareness and open the dialogue, September is recognized as National Suicide Awareness Month. This month is focused on shifting public perception of suicide, spreading hope, and sharing vital information to people affected by suicide. The National Institute of Mental Health has shared warning signs of suicide so you are alert to things to look for in someone who may be thinking of suicide.

**WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:**  
The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

**TALKING ABOUT:**

- ▷ Wanting to die
- ▷ Great guilt or shame
- ▷ Being a burden to others

**FEELING:**

- ▷ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- ▷ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- ▷ Unbearable emotional or physical pain

**CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:**

- ▷ Making a plan or researching ways to die
- ▷ Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away important items, or making a will
- ▷ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- ▷ Displaying extreme mood swings
- ▷ Eating or sleeping more or less
- ▷ Using drugs or alcohol more often

**If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.**

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**  
Call or text 988  
Chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

**Crisis Text Line**  
Text "HELLO" to 741741

**NIH** National Institute of Mental Health

[nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](https://nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)

Southern Nevada Health District has made a commitment to improving the care we provide for our patients and our team members who are struggling with suicide. If you are interested in participating in an evidence-based suicide prevention training at no cost, joining the Zero Suicide Implementation team, or need additional suicide awareness resources/information please contact Rebecca Cruz-Nañez at [cruz-nanez@snhd.org](mailto:cruz-nanez@snhd.org) or Heidi Laird at [lairdh@snhd.org](mailto:lairdh@snhd.org).

*\*As a reminder The Employee Assistance Program is available for all staff and those sharing living spaces. Please click here for additional information: [SNHD EAP Program](#)*