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TO: State Board of Health Members

FROM: Cassius Lockett, PhD, District Health Officer

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

Youth Vaping

As students returned to classrooms this month, the Southern Nevada Health District highlighted new data showing that youth vaping remains a significant public health concern. Nearly one-third of Clark County high school students have tried e-cigarettes, according to the 2025 Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey. This underscores the need for parents, educators and community members to talk with young people about the risks of nicotine and vaping. The Health District is encouraging families to start conversations early, recognize the signs of vaping and use available resources to help prevent nicotine addiction among youth.

According to the survey, 31% of Clark County high school students and 17% of middle school students have tried e-cigarettes. In addition, 12% of high school students and 8% of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes during the past 30 days. E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Like all tobacco products, e-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive chemical that can affect brain development and impair attention, learning, mood and impulse control.

Most tobacco use begins during adolescence, when young people can be influenced by peer pressure, tobacco marketing and easy access to nicotine products. Among Clark County students who reported using e-cigarettes, the most common source was friends, family members or someone else. Sixty percent of high school students and 59% of middle school students said they obtained a vape this way, illustrating the important role families and communities play in preventing youth access to vaping products.

Marketing and online exposure also contribute to youth interest in vaping. Social media, product placement and depictions of tobacco and nicotine use in entertainment aimed at younger audiences can influence behavior. Nearly three-quarters of students (74%) reported seeing e-cigarette-related content on social media. Research also shows that teens who viewed tobacco- or nicotine-related content on TikTok at least weekly had three times the odds of currently using e-cigarettes.

Disposable vaping devices remain the most commonly used type of e-cigarette among U.S. youth who currently vape, accounting for 55.6% of reported use. Popular brands reported among youth include Geek Bar, Elf Bar and Lost Mary.

Access to tobacco retailers also remains a concern. About 35% of public schools in Las Vegas are within 1,000 feet of a tobacco retailer, highlighting the need for continued prevention, education and enforcement efforts to reduce youth access to nicotine products.

Parents and caregivers can help prevent youth vaping by talking openly with children about the risks of nicotine, asking questions about what they see and hear from friends and online, and recognizing signs that a young person may be using e-cigarettes. Schools and community organizations also play an important role by providing education, support and resources that help young people make healthy choices.

Additional resources

- [Get Healthy Clark County](#): Resources for parents, educators and youth, including quit-vaping information and educational materials.
- [Nevada Tobacco Quitline](#): Nevada residents age 13 and older can receive free help quitting tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, by calling 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).
- [American Lung Association's NOT for Me](#): A free, interactive eight-week online program designed to help teens quit vaping or smoking
- [Truth Initiative: freedom from nicotine addiction](#): Offers quitting tools and support. Text EXPROGRAM to 88709.
- [My Life, My Quit Quitline](#): For teens 13 years and older. Text START MY QUIT to 36072.

Community Health Improvement Plan

After more than a year of collaboration with community members, healthcare partners and local organizations, the Southern Nevada Health District released the 2026-2031 Southern Nevada Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), outlining key priorities and strategies to improve health outcomes in Clark County over the next five years.

The CHIP is available at www.healthysouthernnevada.org and reflects input from nearly 200 community members who participated in the planning process beginning in April 2025. Participants identified four public health priorities for Southern Nevada which include:

Access to Care

Access to care focuses on ensuring people can obtain the health services they need when they need them and without barriers. This includes affordable, timely and culturally appropriate medical, mental health and preventive services.

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Clark County had a lower percentage of adults with health insurance coverage in 2023 (84.3%) compared with Nevada (85.4%) and the United States (89%). Hispanic and Latino adults had the lowest rate of health insurance coverage at 74%, followed by American Indian and Alaska Native adults at 75.8%.
- Access to care is essential for preventing disease, managing chronic conditions and improving overall health outcomes. Without timely and affordable care, people are more likely to experience worsened health, avoidable hospitalizations and increased health disparities, especially in underserved populations.

Chronic Disease

Chronic diseases are long-term health conditions that typically progress slowly and persist over time, often for the rest of a person's life. Common examples include heart disease, diabetes and cancer, many of which are influenced by factors such as diet, physical activity and tobacco use.

- According to the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, hypertension prevalence in Clark County was 34.6% in 2023, slightly higher than Nevada overall (34.0%) and the national rate (34%).
- Chronic diseases are a leading cause of death. However, prioritizing prevention, early detection, and management can improve health outcomes and extend life expectancy.

Public Health Funding

Financial support for public health provided by governments, organizations or institutions helps protect and improve the health of communities. It supports programs and services such as disease prevention, health education, emergency preparedness and access to care, all of which aim to reduce health risks and improve population well-being.

- Public health and prevention efforts account for only about 3% of total U.S. health spending, despite chronic and preventable conditions driving many healthcare costs nationwide.
- Sustained investment in public health infrastructure can strengthen emergency preparedness, improve access to care and support healthier communities.

Substance Use

Substance use affects individuals, families and communities. Misuse can lead to serious consequences, including addiction, mental health challenges, chronic disease and overdose. Addressing substance use through prevention, treatment, harm reduction and recovery support can improve public safety, strengthen families, and build healthier, more resilient communities.

- The drug overdose death rate in Clark County increased from 17.5 per 100,000 residents in 2019 to 28.1 in 2023. During the same period, Nevada's statewide rate rose from 15.5 to 29.1 per 100,000 residents. In 2024, Clark County reported 802 confirmed drug overdose deaths, representing a nearly 16% increase compared to 2023. Opioids, both prescription and illicit, were involved in 67.5% of these fatalities.
- Expanding access to behavioral health services, treatment programs and overdose prevention resources can help reduce substance-related harm and connect residents with the support they need before a crisis occurs.

The CHIP serves as a roadmap for collaborative action among public health, healthcare, community organizations and residents to improve health outcomes across Southern Nevada. To learn more, or to be a part of the CHIP initiative's working groups for any public health priority area, email HealthyConnect@SNHD.org.

Cyclosporiasis Outbreak

The Health District has reported 10 cases of cyclosporiasis among Clark County residents in 2026. Three of the cases were likely acquired during travel to states associated with the multistate outbreak that began in May. The individuals traveled during their exposure periods before returning to Clark County. At this time, there is no evidence that their exposure occurred in Clark County or elsewhere in Nevada.

Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by the microscopic parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. Sporadic cases are reported locally each year, and there is no indication of increased local transmission.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are investigating the multistate outbreak linked to shredded iceberg lettuce distributed by Taylor Farms de Mexico and served at certain Taco Bell locations. As of August 5, the CDC reported 6,358 laboratory-confirmed cases and 278 hospitalizations associated with the outbreak.

The best-by dates for the recalled lettuce have passed, and the products should no longer be available in stores or restaurants. People should check any products they still have and should not eat lettuce included in the recall. When purchasing iceberg lettuce that has not been recalled, choose whole heads rather than prewashed, bagged lettuce. Discard the outer two or three layers of whole heads, separate the remaining leaves and rinse them thoroughly under running water. Washing produce can reduce, but does not eliminate, the risk of *Cyclospora* contamination.

Cooking produce thoroughly is the most effective way to reduce the risk of infection. Consumers should also:

- Wash their hands with soap and water before and after handling produce.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting or cooking them.
- Scrub firm produce with a clean produce brush.
- Peel produce when appropriate after washing it.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled or cooked produce as soon as possible.
- Clean and sanitize surfaces or containers that have come into contact with recalled lettuce.

The most common symptom of cyclosporiasis is watery diarrhea. Other symptoms may include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps, bloating, increased gas, nausea, fatigue and, less commonly, vomiting or a low-grade fever. Some people recover without treatment, but symptoms can last several weeks or longer and may go away and then return. Antibiotics can reduce the severity and duration of the illness.

Dehydration is a primary concern, particularly for young children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems. People who have experienced watery diarrhea for more than a few days should contact a health care provider and ask whether testing for *Cyclospora* is appropriate. Anyone experiencing signs of severe dehydration, including dizziness, weakness or decreased urination, should seek medical care promptly.

People who are immunocompromised or especially concerned about infection may consider choosing thoroughly cooked produce while the outbreak remains under investigation. People should also monitor public health advisories and avoid foods specifically identified as part of the outbreak.

For more information about cyclosporiasis, visit www.cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis.

Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention Summit

Public health professionals, behavioral health experts, community leaders and advocates gathered Thursday, August 13, for the seventh annual Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention Summit hosted by the Southern Nevada Health District. The event explored the latest approaches to preventing substance misuse, reducing overdose deaths and supporting long-term recovery.

This year's theme, "The Science of Hope: Strategies to Reduce Substance Use and Build Resilience in Our Community," highlighted evidence-based approaches to strengthening prevention efforts, improving access to treatment and recovery services, and building healthier, more resilient communities.

The sold-out event was presented by the Health District in partnership with the PACT Coalition, Nevada High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy.

Summit sessions explored a wide range of timely issues, including:

- Emerging drug trends, overdose response and prevention strategies.

- Integrated approaches to mental health and substance use care.
- Peer-recovery support, lived experience and recovery-friendly workplace initiatives.
- Community partnerships to strengthen prevention, treatment, rescue and recovery efforts.

The keynote speaker was Mary Jadwisiak, founder and CEO of Holding the Hope, a behavioral health consulting and training organization focused on peer support and recovery. Additional presenters included experts from the Health District, the PACT Coalition, Foundation for Recovery, U.S. VETS Las Vegas and other behavioral health and community organizations. The summit also featured a panel discussion, “The Long Game: A Decade of Coalition-Driven Overdose Prevention in Southern Nevada,” recognizing the Southern Nevada Opioid Advisory Council as it marks its 10th anniversary.

West Nile virus

As of August 10, the Health District is reporting one neuroinvasive case of West Nile virus in a Clark County resident. The Health District has set 1,917 traps throughout the county and submitted 1,976 sample pools—representing 38,023 mosquitoes—to the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory for analysis. Of the sample pools submitted, 41 have tested positive for West Nile virus. No sample pools have tested positive for St. Louis encephalitis or Western equine encephalitis.

The Health District continues its mosquito surveillance efforts throughout Clark County and reminds residents that the presence of West Nile virus in mosquitoes increases the risk of human infection.

The Health District recommends the following steps to reduce the risk of mosquito bites:

- Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Remove standing water around homes and businesses where mosquitoes can breed.
- Ensure window and door screens fit properly to keep mosquitoes outside.

The Health District works with local partners to implement mosquito control measures when virus activity is detected. Residents can stay informed about local mosquito surveillance activity by visiting the Health District's weekly West Nile virus surveillance reports at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/programs/mosquito-surveillance/arbovirus-update/.