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TO: State Board of Health Members

FROM: Cassius Lockett, PhD, District Health Officer

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

State of Public Health

The Southern Nevada Health District brought together public health leaders, community partners and stakeholders during its 2026 State of Public Health event, held in recognition of National Public Health Week, to highlight progress, share emerging data and spotlight collaborative efforts to improve health outcomes across Clark County. Throughout the event, Health District staff and community partners shared insights from ongoing work addressing some of the region’s most pressing public health challenges — including substance use, access to care, and outreach to vulnerable populations — underscoring the impact of coordinated, community-based approaches.

The event also highlighted the role of public health in strengthening communities through prevention, partnerships and data-driven strategies. Over the past year, the Southern Nevada Health District expanded partnerships to distribute more than 200,000 doses of naloxone, helping Clark County reach the State’s saturation goal for the first time, while also increasing access to testing and care across the region. Investments in public health infrastructure, including new state funding, are strengthening the Health District’s ability to respond to emerging public health threats and support long-term community health. These efforts continue to make a meaningful difference in people’s lives while building a stronger foundation for the future.

A key focus of the event was the evolving overdose epidemic in Clark County. Health District subject matter experts and partners shared data showing that while overdose deaths rose sharply in recent years, preliminary data from 2025 suggest a decline locally, reflecting broader national trends while underscoring the need for sustained, targeted interventions. Speakers highlighted ongoing initiatives that are making a difference in the community, including expanded naloxone distribution, increased availability of test strips, enhanced outreach and data tools including the regional [substance use dashboard](#). These efforts are helping connect individuals to care, prevent fatal overdoses and strengthen coordination among response partners.

The event also showcased the Health District’s Street Medicine program, which is bringing medical care directly to individuals experiencing homelessness. Using a low-barrier, relationship-based approach, the team delivers primary care services in encampments and other outdoor locations — meeting people where they are and connecting them to ongoing care and services. Early outreach efforts have already connected dozens of individuals to care, demonstrating the program’s potential to improve health outcomes for some of the community’s most vulnerable residents. Health District

staff and community partners shared perspectives on building trust, removing barriers to care and coordinating services across systems.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage with public health programs and community organizations during an open forum and resource exhibit session.

The State of Public Health event serves as an opportunity to share progress, elevate community collaboration and highlight work underway to protect and improve the health of Southern Nevada residents. For more information, visit <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/state-of-the-health-district/>

Public Health Heroes

The Health District recognized its 2026 Public Health Heroes during the Southern Nevada District Board of Health meeting on April 23, 2026. The annual recognition honors individuals and organizations nominated by Health District staff for their leadership, innovation and service in advancing community health. This year's honorees represented a diverse range of sectors, including education, law enforcement, health care and higher education. This year's honorees included:

Kelly Adams, CEO, Mesa View Regional Hospital

Kelly Adams has expanded access to critical public health resources in rural Southern Nevada. Under his leadership, Mesa View Regional Hospital partnered with the Health District to install one of the region's first COVID-19 test kit vending machines in Mesquite, significantly increasing access to testing. Since 2022, the machine has distributed nearly 20,000 test kits and now also offers naloxone and drug-testing strips to support overdose prevention. Adams' commitment to collaboration and innovation has helped bring life-saving resources to underserved communities.

Clark County School District Food Service Department

The Clark County School District Food Service Department plays a vital role in combating food insecurity and supporting student health. During the 2024–2025 school year, the department served nearly 42 million meals, ensuring all students had access to nutritious food at no cost, regardless of household income. Through the federal Community Eligibility Provision, the program reduces barriers and stigma while helping nearly 300,000 students come to school nourished and ready to learn each day.

Nevada State University – Breathe with Ease Initiative

Nevada State University's Breathe with Ease Initiative advances tobacco prevention and promotes healthier campus environments. In 2025, the university adopted a comprehensive tobacco-free campus policy, joining more than 2,000 colleges and universities nationwide. Through education, campus engagement and partnerships, the initiative promotes cessation resources, reduces exposure to secondhand smoke and reinforces a culture of health across campus.

Officer James Pendleton, Henderson Police Department

Officer James Pendleton protects community health through prevention and education. As part of the Henderson Police Department's Community Relations Unit, he has played a key role in the Prescription Pill Disposal Program, helping safely remove unused and potentially dangerous medications from homes. His efforts reduce the risk of accidental poisonings, suicide attempts and prescription drug misuse. Through ongoing outreach with youth, schools and neighborhoods, Pendleton continues to promote safer, healthier communities.

The 2026 Public Health Hero recipients reflected the breadth of work that supports public health in Southern Nevada, from improving access to care and prevention resources to strengthening systems that help communities thrive.

Legionnaires' Disease Investigation

On April 28, the Health District announced it was investigating two travel-associated cases of Legionnaires' disease associated with stays at the Wynn Las Vegas. One person stayed at the property in September 2025 while the other stayed in February 2026. Both individuals have since recovered.

Following notification of these cases, the Health District conducted environmental sampling at the facility. Multiple samples tested positive for *Legionella*, the bacteria that can cause Legionnaires' disease. In response, the Wynn initiated immediate and comprehensive water system remediation measures, and the most recent samples indicate no detectable levels of *Legionella* in the affected areas. The property is also conducting ongoing follow-up testing to help ensure the continued safety of its water systems. The facility is cooperating with the Health District's investigation, has initiated direct guest notifications regarding potential exposure, and is implementing precautionary measures designed to mitigate any further risk of illness.

Legionnaires' disease symptoms typically begin within two to 10 days after exposure to the bacteria. However, people should watch for symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches and headaches for up to two weeks after exposure.

People who are at increased risk of getting sick include:

- People 50 years or older
- Current or former smokers
- People with chronic lung disease
- People with weakened immune systems
- People who take drugs that can weaken their immune systems (after a transplant operation or chemotherapy)
- People with underlying illnesses such as diabetes, kidney failure or liver failure

Anyone with additional questions can contact the Health District's Helpline at (702) 759-4636 (INFO), Monday – Friday, from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. More information on Legionnaire's disease is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html.

Consumer Product Lead Testing

In April 6, the Southern Nevada Health District began offering free lead testing for consumer products on the first Monday of each month from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. at 280 S. Decatur Blvd. The service is designed to help community members identify items that may contain lead and learn how to reduce the risk of exposure, and no appointments are required. Testing is conducted using an X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) Analyzer, which can quickly detect lead and other heavy metals in many common materials and provide immediate results.

The Health District wants the community to know that lead exposure is preventable, but it often comes from everyday items people don't realize may be hazardous. By offering free, accessible testing, residents have access to resources that can help identify potential risks in their homes and to take steps to protect themselves and their families, especially young children, who are most vulnerable to the harmful effects of lead.

Items that may be important to test include:

- Traditional painted pottery used for food or beverages
- Toys, cups and other items frequently handled or mouthed by young children
- Household items such as keys or imported goods

The Health District recently conducted outreach testing of traditional pottery from local retail sources using XRF technology. Items tested — including ceramic water pitchers, bowls, mugs and tortilla makers — showed lead levels ranging from 24 to 64,600 parts per million. After being informed of the potential health risks, the products were voluntarily removed from sale.

Traditional painted ceramic pottery may contain lead in the paint or glaze, which can deteriorate over time and contaminate food or beverages. Lead is a naturally occurring heavy metal that has been found in a variety of consumer products, including cookware, ceramics, spices and imported goods. As these items age or break down, they can release lead dust that may contaminate homes and living spaces.

Children are especially vulnerable to lead exposure because their brains and nervous systems are still developing. Even low levels of lead can cause learning and behavioral problems, while higher levels can result in serious health effects, including anemia, hearing loss, brain damage and, in severe cases, death. Because symptoms are often not immediately visible, a blood test is the only way to confirm exposure. Medicaid and Nevada Check Up cover lead testing for eligible children at 12 months and again at 24 months, or at any time before age 6 if earlier testing was not completed. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to speak with their child's health care provider about lead testing during routine well-child visits.

Questions about consumer product lead testing can be emailed to SNHD_OutbreakSupport@snhd.org.

For more information about childhood lead poisoning prevention, visit: www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/community-health-center/clppp/.

Youth Advocate Rally for Tobacco-free CSN

The Health District's Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Tobacco Control Program and Students Promoting Awareness Responsibility & Knowledge (SPARK), the agency's Youth Advisory Council, hosted an interactive outreach event at the College of Southern Nevada's (CSN) West Charleston campus to educate students, faculty and staff about the benefits of a tobacco-free campus. The event took place Tuesday, April 28, at CSN, 6375 W. Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89146. Members of the Youth Advisory Council answered questions and distributed educational materials to students, faculty and staff.

The Health District's SPARK Youth Advisory Council is made up of local high school students who are actively amplifying youth voices on public health issues while developing leadership and advocacy skills. These students partnered with the Health District's Tobacco Control Program for their SPARK Spring Project, "CSN, The Time is Now." Nearly 2,000 Clark County School District students participated in the project, capturing photographs of their peers holding message boards that reflect support for a tobacco-free campus. A collage of these photos was displayed on the CSN campus as part of the event.

The initiative also encouraged peer-to-peer conversations and put student voices front and center in the call for change, as momentum builds across Southern Nevada to create tobacco-free learning

environments. It highlighted the health and community benefits of adopting a tobacco-free policy and underscored the growing movement among higher education institutions across the region.

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, in 2024, 3.4% of young adults ages 18 to 24 smoked cigarettes, while more than four times as many in this age group reported vaping (14.8%). In Clark County, the prevalence was even higher in 2023, with 7.5% reporting cigarette use and 17.4% reporting e-cigarette use. Nearly all adults who smoke (99%) begin before age 26, making college campuses a critical setting for prevention efforts. Tobacco-free policies not only help reduce smoking rates among students but also shift social norms, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke and support those trying to quit.

To learn more about the benefits of tobacco-free campus policies, visit [3 benefits of tobacco-free policies at colleges and universities](#). For individuals looking to quit smoking, free cessation resources are available through the Nevada Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or nevada.quitlogix.org.

National Infant Immunization Week

During National Infant Immunization Week (April 20-27), the Health District encouraged parents and caregiver to tap into their “Mama Bear” and “Papa Bear” instincts by making sure their children are protected against serious diseases.

To support this effort, the Health District hosted a special, family-friendly Mama Bear, Papa Bear Clinic at its Main Public Health Center at 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107. This one-day event offered low-cost or no-cost childhood vaccines, family resources and giveaways. Activities and resources provided included a diaper bank, access to immunization records and educational stations on topics such as safe sleep, car seat safety and early childhood development. In addition, giveaways for children getting vaccinated and raffle opportunities for parents and caregivers were available at Health District Immunization Clinics throughout the week.