



DATE: March 6, 2026

TO: State Board of Health Members

FROM: Cassius Lockett, PhD, District Health Officer

SUBJECT: District Health Officer Report

3rd Annual Tobacco Free Living Summit

The Southern Nevada Health District's Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion hosted the 3rd Annual Tobacco-Free Living Summit through its Tobacco Control Program. The summit addressed the detrimental effects of tobacco use within the Black community. To help reduce this burden, the Tobacco Control Program created Because We Matter LV, an African American-focused tobacco initiative, which guides the program's efforts and served as the foundation for this year's event.

The summit brought together community members, advocates and experts on February 19, at the Dr. William Pearson Community Center, 1625 W. Carey Ave., North Las Vegas, NV 89032. This free, public event focused on urgent issues shaping public health today, including the youth vaping epidemic, flavored tobacco products, tobacco control policies, and proven cessation resources. Held during Black History Month, the summit also explored the disproportionate impact of tobacco use on Black communities and highlighted actionable strategies to promote healthier, tobacco-free lives.

Smoking is a leading risk factor for chronic and life-threatening conditions, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), stroke, heart attack and lung cancer. In Clark County, Black adults experience a disproportionate burden of these smoking-related conditions. In 2023, Black adults in Clark County had the second-highest smoking prevalence among racial and ethnic groups at 15.2%, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Only residents categorized as other race reported a higher prevalence, at 16.3%. That same year, 10.9% of Black adults in Clark County reported having COPD, emphysema or chronic bronchitis—the highest prevalence among all racial and ethnic groups in the county. Black adults also had the highest prevalence of stroke in 2023, at 4.4%.

The impact of smoking is also evident in mortality data. Between 2018 and 2022, Black adults in Clark County experienced one of the highest age-adjusted lung cancer death rates, at 33.4 deaths per 100,000 population, according to the National Cancer Institute. In 2022, Black adults also had the highest age-adjusted death rate from heart attack – 43.5 per 100,000 – based on data from the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.

The summit featured a variety of tobacco-related topics and speakers:

- **Onjewel Smith**, echo, LLC and American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation
Menthol tobacco and cultural exploitation
- **Kayla Ramsey**, Nevada Cancer Coalition
Lung cancer screening matters

- **Dr. Karen Beard**, Amplify! African American Statewide Coordinating Center
Moving beyond cessation
- **DJ Yearwood**, 2023 Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Youth Advocate of the Year
Protecting Black youth from vaping
- **Tracy Truran**, Health Plan of Nevada and Richard Davis, Dignity Health
Rapid-fire session: Nevada cessation programs and resources

Because We Matter LV is a smoking and vaping prevention initiative for African Americans in Clark County and is part of the Health District's Tobacco Control Program. The initiative works to raise awareness, provide culturally relevant education, connect individuals to cessation resources and encourage healthier, smoke- and vape-free lives throughout the community. Learn more about Because We Matter LV at becausewematterlv.org.

American Heart Month

The Health District recognized American Heart Month in February by offering free blood pressure screenings and educational events at barbershops, beauty salons and faith-based organizations across Clark County.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and stroke remains a leading cause. Nationwide, someone dies of cardiovascular disease about every 34 seconds, and someone dies of stroke about every 3 minutes and 14 seconds. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force provides its strongest recommendation for routine blood pressure screening, recognizing hypertension as a major, preventable risk factor for heart disease, stroke and heart attack. Identifying and addressing high blood pressure early can significantly reduce the risk of serious cardiovascular events.

Local data highlight persistent disparities in heart health outcomes. In Clark County, Black adults experience a disproportionate burden of cardiovascular disease. In 2023, Black adults had the highest prevalence of hypertension at 40.4% and stroke at 4.4%, and among the highest prevalence of coronary heart disease at 3.3% among racial and ethnic groups in the county, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. In 2022, Black adults in Clark County also had the highest age-adjusted death rate due to heart attack, at 43.5 per 100,000, based on the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network.

American Heart Month events, which were open to the public included:

Salon Talk

A free, educational discussion focused on heart health and its connection to brain health, lifestyle choices and prevention was held on Friday, February 6 at Expertise Cosmetology Institute, 1911 Stella Lake St., Las Vegas, NV 89106.

Free blood pressure screening events were offered at:

- **Expertise Cosmetology Institute**
1911 Stella Lake St., Las Vegas, NV 89106
- **Heat City Fades**
270 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107
- **Executive Cuts**
921 W. Owens Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89106
- **Masterpiece Barbershop**
2300 N. Rainbow Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89108

- **5 Star Barbershop**
2696 W. Ann Rd., North Las Vegas, NV 89031
- **Master Barbering Galo**
8090 Blue Diamond Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89178
- **Ego Tripp**
205 W. Centennial Pkwy, North Las Vegas, NV 89084
- **Mountaintop Faith Ministries**
2845 S. Lindell Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89146
- **Nehemiah Ministries**
3606 N. Rancho Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89130

The Health District encouraged the public to take advantage of these free events to learn their blood pressure numbers and connect with heart health resources available in the community. More information about heart disease and stroke prevention is available at [Get Healthy Clark County | Million Hearts](#).

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

In observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Saturday, Feb. 7, the Southern Nevada Health District joined community partners to provide additional health services to the community.

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day highlights efforts to reduce HIV and other sexually transmitted infections while addressing HIV-related stigma in Black/African American communities. Black/African American people continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black/African American individuals, who make up about 12% of the U.S. population, accounted for roughly 38% of the approximately 39,000 new HIV diagnoses in 2023. In Clark County, there were 140 new HIV diagnoses among Black people in 2024, compared to 106 new diagnoses among white people.

The Health District and the CDC recommend that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once. People with ongoing risk should be tested at least annually and as often as every three months for those at higher risk.

The observance included a variety of activities over a two-day period:

Friday, February 6

- The Health District offered free HIV testing at Sunny Market, 600 W. Lake Mead Blvd., North Las Vegas, NV 89030. Safe sex kits and education about pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP, PEP) were also available.
- The National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Dinner was held at The Center, 401 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89101. With the theme “A Brand New Day,” the evening of food, family and community also included free HIV testing.

Saturday, February 7

- The Center’s mobile testing unit was available for rapid HIV and Hepatitis C screening at the Southern Nevada Health Consortium’s Health Fair, held at the new West Las Vegas Library, 1861 N. MLK Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89106.
- Free HIV testing was offered at McDonald’s, 3010 Las Vegas Blvd. N., North Las Vegas, NV 89030.

Additional year-round testing opportunities

Free HIV testing is also available at the following Health District locations:

- Main Public Health Center, 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, Monday–Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed noon to 1 p.m.)

The Health District’s Sexual Health Outreach and Prevention Program offers no-cost HIV/STI screenings year-round through its Sexually Transmitted Infection Express Testing program. No appointments are needed, but clients must be without symptoms. Additional testing for syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia is also available at the following locations:

- Main Public Health Center, 280 S. Decatur, Las Vegas, NV 89107; Monday–Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Fremont Public Health Center, 2830 E. Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV 89104; Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Henderson Public Health Center, 220 E. Horizon Dr., Suites A & C, Henderson, NV 89015; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Mesquite Public Health Center, 150 N. Yucca St., Suite 5, Mesquite, NV 89027; 4th Monday of every month, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Same-day HIV testing and treatment services are also available at the Southern Nevada Community Health Center, 280 S. Decatur Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89107, and at the Fremont Public Health Center. HIV services include testing, medical, behavioral health, nutrition, case management, pharmacy services and education. PEP and PrEP services are available for those who test negative for HIV. Services are offered for insured and uninsured patients. Sliding fee scale discounts are available to eligible self-pay patients. For clinic hours and additional information, go to SNCHC.org. Free at-home HIV test kits also are available through the Health District’s [Collect2Protect](#) program.

Early diagnosis allows people with HIV to benefit from antiretroviral therapy (ART), which reduces HIV-related illnesses, lowers the amount of virus in the blood, and decreases the risk of transmission to partners. With treatment, people living with HIV can remain healthy for many years.

Despite national progress in HIV prevention and treatment, about 13% of the more than 1.2 million people living with HIV in the U.S. are unaware of their status and need testing and care. Black individuals also have lower access to key prevention tools. The latest available data show that Black individuals represented around 15% of PrEP users in 2024, despite accounting for more than one-third of new HIV diagnoses, highlighting ongoing gaps in the equitable uptake of PrEP compared with white and Hispanic/Latino populations.

For more information on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, visit [HIV Awareness Days](#).

Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI)

The Southern Nevada Health District assumed primary responsibility for healthcare-associated infections (HAI) prevention and control activities in Clark County beginning January 1, 2026. This transition of responsibility from the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health includes leading HAI investigations, responding to outbreaks occurring within licensed health care facilities, and supporting facilities in strengthening infection prevention and control (IPC) practices.

The Health District will respond to reports of HAIs, suspected clusters, and outbreaks in acute care, long-term care, and other medical facilities, including outpatient settings. The Health District’s HAI team will also provide support using the Infection Control Assessment and Response (ICAR) framework, offering recommendations, training, and resources upon request.

This transition applies specifically to HAI oversight and does not change existing communicable disease reporting requirements. Licensed health care facilities must continue reporting all individual reportable diseases pursuant to NAC 441A, including clusters and outbreaks, and any condition identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a nationally notifiable condition.

The Health District will provide additional information to state-licensed health care facilities included in this transition.

Health care providers can report HAI and other reportable conditions to the Health District:

- Online: <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/reportable-diseases/reportable-diseases-form/>
- Fax: 702-759-1444
- Call: 702-759-1300

Questions, requests for recommendations, consultations, or training may be directed to HAI@snhd.org.

Respiratory Disease Dashboard

The Southern Nevada Health District has launched a new Respiratory Disease Dashboard, a user-friendly online tool that brings together up-to-date data on flu, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Clark County.

Available on the on the Health District's website at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/news-info/statistics-surveillance-reports/, the dashboard allows the public, health care providers, and community partners to track immunization trends, hospitalizations, impacts by age group, geography and other demographics. By offering a combined view of the three major seasonal respiratory illnesses, the tool is designed to improve transparency, support timely decision-making, and enhance awareness of viruses circulating in the community.

This integrated dashboard supports timely monitoring so providers, schools, workplaces and households can stay alert to rising trends, practice prevention and seek care when needed. Publicly available data also help the Health District and community partners coordinate preparedness efforts, inform vaccine and treatment campaigns, and respond proactively.