

December 2018

From the Office of the District Health Officer

DBOH leadership changes for 2019

The Washoe County District Board of Health elected new leadership at the December 2018 meeting, selecting Dr. John Novak as District Board of Health Chair for 2019-2020, and Chief Mike Brown as District Board of Health Vice-Chair for 2019-2020. The DBOH also recognized Dr. George Hess who is retiring at the end of the year after many years of service as the physician representative on the Board.

Dr. Reka Danko, M.D. was appointed to as the physician member of the Board upon Dr. Hess's retirement at the October 2018 meeting. Dr. Danko earned her medical degree at the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, where she also completed her residency in Internal Medicine. Following board certification, Dr. Danko joined a hospitalist practice in Northern Nevada.

In 2013, she also began working at Northern Nevada HOPES, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Reno, where she served as the Chief Medical Officer from 2014 to early 2017. There she focused on building an integrated care model and developing an outpatient addiction treatment program to help those with

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substance use disorder. Dr. Danko became board certified in Addiction Medicine in 2018 and works with community programs to increase education, prevention, and treatment programs. Dr. Danko is a clinical assistant professor at the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine and works as a hospitalist at Saint Mary's hospital.

Nevada Human Airway and Lung Exposure (NHALE) Alliance

The Health District recently participated in a meeting hosted by DRI to discuss formation of the Nevada Human Airway and Lung Exposure (NHALE) Alliance. The Alliance is intended to promote research and policy development regarding health effects of tobacco (including e-cigarettes), marijuana, wildfire, and controlled burn smoke. Because limited research to date has sparse data on the health effects of inhaling substances from these sources, alliance formation was supported by participants that included higher education, health authorities, and non-profit health organizations.

Health District Shining Stars resemble a galaxy of their own

The numbers are in!

Since the Washoe County Commitment to Excellence Shining Star Award program began in November 2017, Health District employees have been recognized over 260 times.



While it's not official, this may be the top number of awards for any department in Washoe County. Leading staff at the Washoe County Health District is WIC employee Jackie Chaidez with 20 Shining Stars!

Congratulations Jackie!

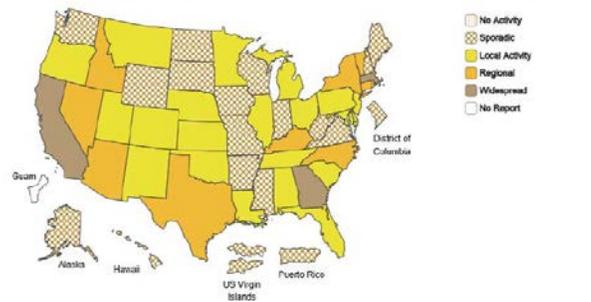
Seasonal Influenza Surveillance

Cases of influenza continue to steadily rise through Week 50, and the county's first confirmed death was reported. While local numbers have yet to reach epidemic levels, the recent fatality is a reminder of the importance of getting a flu shot to prevent illness. Recent media monitoring after the fatality was reported indicates that Health District messaging about the importance of getting vaccinated was featured in over 30 local news stories, which were listened to and viewed by over 175,000 people.

Influenza Surveillance Week 50 stats:

- During week #50, by age group ILI activity was highest among 0-4 years (19.6%) and lowest among 25-49 years (0.7%).
- During week #49, the percentage of persons seen nationally with ILI remained at 2.2%, which is at the national baseline of 2.2%.

Figure 11. Geographic Spread of Influenza as Assessed by State and Territorial Epidemiologists: Week Ending Dec 05, 2018 - Week 49



The Washoe County Health District Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report includes the CDC's map of seasonal influenza activity throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, US Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia.

- In Washoe County the P&I death for week #50 was 3.6%. Nationally the P&I death for week #48 was 6.0%, below the week #48 epidemic threshold of 6.6%.
- During week #50 there were 10 influenza-associated hospitalizations; 2 individuals had been vaccinated.
- Regional influenza activity was reported across Nevada during week #49.
- During week #50 WCHD reported one influenza-associated death

Seasonal Influenza Weekly Reports can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/WashoeFlu>

New Air Quality Equipment in Washoe County

Washoe County residents have some new air quality equipment in the area now to help keep our air clean. Air Quality Management Enforcement staff has purchased an olfactometer, a device which will allow inspectors to quantify odors. It works by filtering ambient air to remove all odors and then performs a dilution series by allowing specific quantities of unfiltered air through the device. The olfactometer will initially be used as a compliance aid. The ultimate goal will be to update local regulations to allow the device to be used for enforcement.



The olfactometer will allow inspectors to quantify odors.

In November of 2017 staff issued an Authority to Construct permit for an Air Curtain Incinerator (ACI) that was recently purchased by the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District. Use of the ACI is mutually beneficial because it helps decrease the amount of smoke generated from the burning of vegetative matter, and also reduces the amount of fire on the ground and thus the chance for escape.



Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District's new Air Curtain Incinerator (ACI).

HIV a continuing concern and challenge for Public Health

In 2015, an estimated 1.1 million persons in the United States were living with HIV infection, and 86% were aware of their infection. But, an estimated 1 in 7 people in the U.S. don't know they have HIV. In Washoe County, 1,281 people are estimated to have HIV, just over 10% of the 11,901 people living with HIV in Nevada in 2017.

Despite the progress achieved in promoting personal awareness about HIV, some populations continue to fall behind. HIV stigma continues to be a major barrier to prevention, testing, and treatment.

HIV continues to affect certain groups of people more than others. They include men who have sex with men (especially young, black and Latino/Hispanic men), people who inject drugs, and transgender women. We must continue to focus our efforts on these key populations to ensure that they reap the benefits of our new HIV prevention and treatment tools.

The alarming increase in other STDs (chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis) has a tremendous impact on sexual health, including HIV status. Of considerable concern is the extraordinary increase of infectious syphilis in Washoe County. Most cases of infectious syphilis and HIV are among men. Approximately 30% of the infectious syphilis cases in Washoe County since August 2013 are co-infected with HIV.

2018 Coaches Challenge winners "Back the Pack"

The 2018 winning classrooms from the Wolf Pack Coaches Challenge were honored at Mackay Stadium during the November 10 Nevada football game (pictured below).



Teachers and students received free tickets to the game and students were also provided a free healthy meal and lunch bag.

In addition to working on Coaches Challenge programming, Chronic Disease Prevention staff met and spoke with several community groups including at the Nevada Health Conference (smoke free workplaces), the Washoe County School District Nurses (e-cigarettes), TMCC Student Graduate Association (tobacco free campuses), UNR students (chronic disease prevention), and Renown Community Benefit team and awardees (smoke free workplaces).

Environmental Firsts

It was the first time ever that Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) confirmation of food source to a human case and a food borne illness outbreak was used in Washoe County.

EHS Epidemiology program staff investigated local cases of Salmonella Newport that were part of a nationwide outbreak in October and November. There were four cases identified in Washoe County and staff was able to retrieve shopping information from two of them. One of the cases was linked to a large retailer that was on the recall list.

On November 14, EHS staff collected a ground beef sample from the case's residence that had been stored in the freezer. On November 20, EHS received word from the Nevada State Public Health lab that the ground beef sample was positive for Salmonella Newport and a

match to the case. The nationwide outbreak was confirmed by WGS.

Another FIRST?

For possibly the first time ever in Washoe County history, a complaint of a hand-dug well was lodged and validated. The property owner was issued a notice of violation and will be required to abandon the well.

The Environmental Health Services team that investigated the complaint is coordinating with State of Nevada Division of Water Resources to ensure that any other specific needs they might have are met.

Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) –

Nearly two months after Halloween and now we are talking about CASPER? Yes!

The Washoe County Health District will be conducting a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response or CASPER in March 2019. The Public Health Preparedness planning team is meeting frequently and will have the CASPER questions finalized soon.

Because the CASPER will only be successful if enough volunteers can go into the field and conduct household surveys over the course of five days, a volunteer recruitment survey was conducted that collected information from interested people, as well as let respondents select shifts.

Washoe County will be the fourth jurisdiction in Nevada to conduct a CASPER. The four health authorities are planning to combine the baseline emergency preparedness information for emergency planners within the regions.

