

**Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness
Division Director Staff Report
Board Meeting Date: December 19, 2024**

DATE: December 13, 2024

TO: District Board of Health

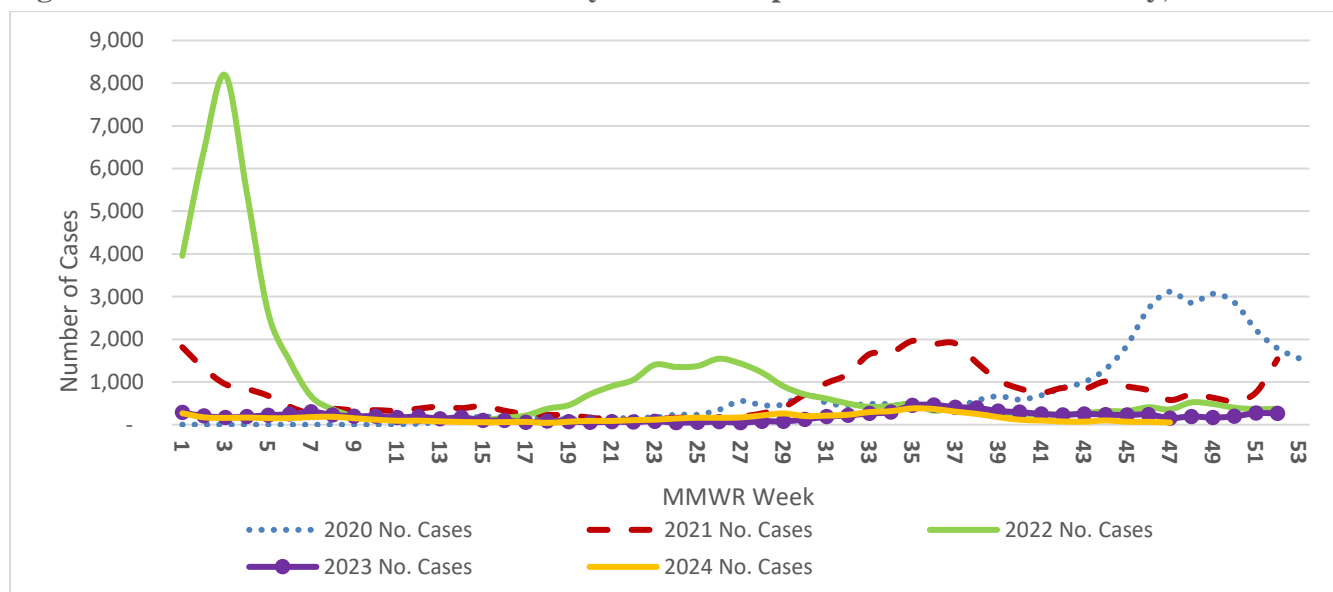
FROM: Nancy Diao, ScD, EPHP Director
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SUBJECT: **Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness** – Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness – Epidemiology, Public Health Preparedness, Emergency Medical Services, Vital Statistics

Epidemiology Program

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) – During the month of November so far, 216 new COVID-19 cases were reported among Washoe County residents (data as of 11/26/2024). Fig 1 provides an overview of the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases reported to Washoe County to date by MMWR week from 2020 through November 2024. Cases of COVID-19 are currently low and stable in the month of November, and have been averaging less than 20 cases by 100k residents per week since MMWR week 41.

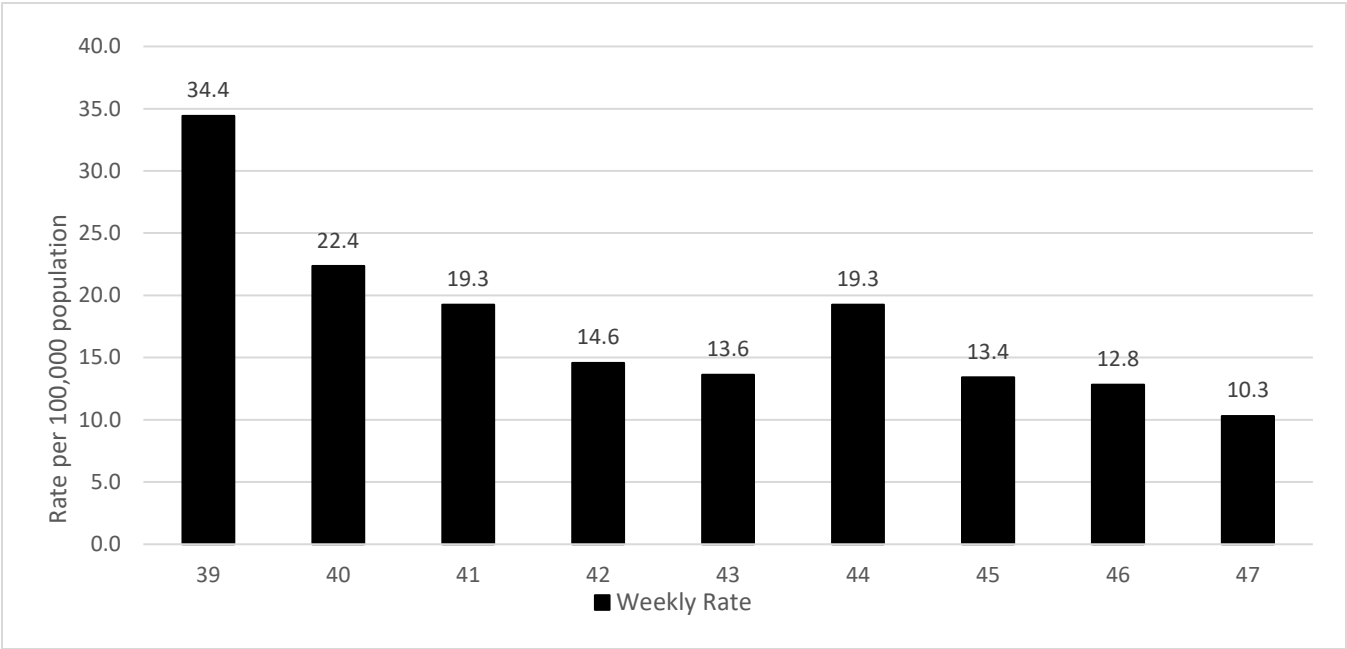
Fig 1. Total Number of COVID-19 Cases by Week of Report Date in Washoe County, 2020-2024



Note: there is no MMWR week 53 in 2021, 2022, or 2023

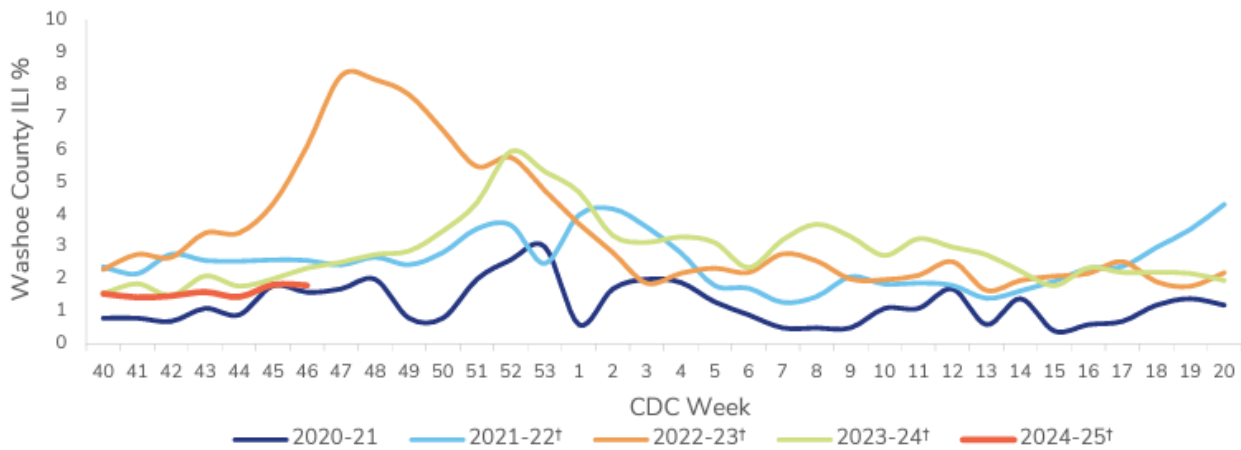
Fig 2 illustrates the number of new cases by report date per 100,000 population over the course of a nine-week period, from September 22 through November 23, 2024. As of MMWR week 47, Washoe County received reports of 10.3 new cases per 100,000 population.

Fig 2. Newly Reported COVID-19 Cases Per 100,000 population by MMWR Week, September 22 - November 23, 2024, Washoe County



Influenza-like Illness – Influenza season officially began in MMWR week 40, September 29, 2024. Figure 3 provides a snapshot of the percent of patients presenting to sentinel surveillance providers with influenza-like illness (ILI) defined as fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ [37.8°C]) and cough and/or sore throat.

Fig 3. ILI Activity Reported by Sentinel Providers, Washoe County, 2020-2024 Seasons†



† Does not have a week 53, so the week 53 value is an average of week 52 and week 1.

Outbreaks – There have been 9 newly declared outbreaks in November*. Six (6) Gastrointestinal Illness, one (1) Respiratory Illness, one (1) RSV, and one (1) Hand Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks.

Table 1: Number of Outbreaks Declared by Type and Month, 2024												
Type	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gastrointestinal Illness	3	6	1	1	3	2	1	0	4	3	6	
Respiratory Illness	3	5	2	2	1	0	0	2	2	1	2	
Influenza Confirmed	6	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
COVID-19 Confirmed	1	3	1	1	1	1	5	0	3	1	0	
Rash Illness	0	0	2	1	1	1	5	0	0	0	1	
Other	7	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Total	20	15	9	5	7	4	12	3	9	5	9	0

*Data obtained as of November 26, 2024 at the time of this report, and will be updated in the next report if there are updates.

Epi News – Epi News is a brief (1-3 page) newsletter that has been produced and disseminated by the Epidemiology Program since 1997. Epi News publications are emailed and faxed to 700-800 subscribers, are topic dependent, and are available at <https://www.nnph.org/programs-and-services/ephp/communicable-diseases-and-epidemiology/epi-news/index.php>.

In November, there were two (2) Epi News newsletters published:

- **First Clade I Mpox in the United States (CDC HAN):** This Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory was issued to provide information about the first case of clade I mpox diagnosed in the United States and recommendations to clinicians about preventing, diagnosing, treating, and reporting mpox cases. On November 15, 2024, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) confirmed the first reported case of clade I mpox in the United States. The CDC and the local and state health departments are investigating potential contacts; no additional cases in the United States have been detected. The risk of clade I mpox to the public in the United States remains low. This HAN includes information to clinicians, laboratories, and the general public and symptoms, testing, reporting, and preventions methods to maintain mpox on a low occurrence.
- **Preparing Your Holiday Foods Safely:** This Epi News serves to educate the public in time for the Thanksgiving Holidays on increased risk of harmful bacteria and methods for safe food handling. Turkey, especially raw turkey, can be contaminated with bacteria such as Salmonella, Clostridium perfringens, and Campylobacter. Clostridium perfringens is the second most common bacterial cause of food poisoning. Harmful bacteria grow in foods that are left at room temperature and can cause vomiting and abdominal cramps within 6 to 24 hours after eating. The CDC reports that Clostridium perfringens outbreaks occur more often during the holiday season in November and December. Methods of safety in food cooking, storage, and disease reporting are outlined in this Epi News article.

Other Reports –

- The 2023 Washoe County Community Antibiotogram has been completed and published on November 14, 2024. The report is located at <https://www.nnph.org/programs-and->

services/ephp/communicable-diseases-and-epidemiology/healthcare-professionals/County-wide%20Antibiogram.php

General Communicable Diseases – EpiTrax reporting system is continuously receiving feedback and updates. Several validation processes are in place to verify reporting is accurate. During November so far, there were 152 positive labs reported, with 47% resulting in a confirmed, probable, or suspect case.

Epidemiology Program Cross Divisional Projects

- **Extensively Drug-Resistant Organisms (XDRO) database** – The Epidemiology Program is working with Tech Services to build a database for storing and tracking cases reported with carbapenem producing organisms (CPO) and *Candida auris* infections, both of which are now recognized as chronic infectious diseases and have the potential to spread from patients to clinicians as well as surfaces and are highly resistant to antimicrobial treatments. These types of infections are being closely monitored from CDC as emergent infections and NNPH has built a strong Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) prevention program to coordinate, detect, and mitigate spread once these cases are identified. Tech Services has built the front end, secure login portal, and are in the testing phase prior to migrating existing data that NNPH'S Epidemiology Program has tracked since 2018. Technology Services finalized Phase I of the XDRO database and the NNPH Healthcare Associated Infection Coordinator epidemiologist has started to enter data received into the new database. Area hospitals are being contacted to explore the logistics required on electronic feeds of admissions data. Current drafted user agreements are approved for use.
- **Foodborne Disease Detection Database (FD3)** – The Epidemiology Program is going through an extensive process in building a database to detect and track foodborne, waterborne, and other enteric illnesses. This database will house both lab-confirmed cases received and interviewed by epidemiologists as well as food-establishment complaints received by the Environmental Health Services Division staff. The multiple data inputs into a single database that should assist in earlier detection of potential outbreaks and trends in enteric conditions and illness. Due to complex coding requirements, Epidemiology Program staff have been working with the CDC to help design and implement the database. The current data system building process is temporarily on halt because the Epidemiology team was notified on October 9 by CDC's support team that the database platform hosted by CDC will be phasing out by September 2025. Alternative platforms and data structure migrations are being explored.

Public Health Preparedness (PHP) Program

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) -

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) PHP Program will conclude its 2024 training sessions on December 4th with an Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Training facilitated by the Nevada Department of

Emergency Management's AFN Division. This training introduces the concept of AFN and provides foundational tools for integrating these considerations into daily operations and emergency response efforts. The 2025 training calendar is being finalized and will be distributed in early January. New topics planned for the upcoming year include Shelter Training with the American Red Cross, Real-Life Applications for NIMS-ICS with Washoe County School District Emergency Management, and Individual/Household Emergency Preparedness with Washoe County Emergency Management.

PHP staff and other state jurisdictions participated in the State of Nevada PHEP Quarterly PHEP POETE (Planning, Organizing, Equipping, Training, and Exercising) meeting held on November 11, 2024. This was an opportunity to share information regarding activities and update any upcoming plans for the fiscal year.

A number of classes were attended by PHP staff in the month of November. PHP staff attended two courses (PER-354, PER-355) from November 4th to November 7th provided by the Counter Terrorism Operations Support (CTOS) at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) in Mercury, Nevada. These courses provided hands-on training on how to respond to a nuclear or radiological event at a responder level. The PHP staff will use the information and education to help inform the NNPH community reception center plan. Also, an Introduction to Bomb Threat Management class was offered by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office on November 13, 2024. The class was attended by members of PHP and provided attendees with foundational knowledge on domestic bomb threat data, the Office for Bombing Prevention Bombing Threat Management Program (BTMP) process, elements of a bomb threat plan, and the overall impact of bomb threats.

Members of PHP staff are working with the State of Nevada PHEP to coordinate the state's 5-year strategic plan workgroup meetings for November and December. The workgroups include Fiscal & Administration, Clinical Advisor, Behavioral Health, Pediatric, Statewide Bed Availability, Health Equity, Information Sharing, and Resources and Supply Chain. This is an ongoing effort to support the state's strategic planning efforts.

FEMA and CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) developed the Cyber Ready Game as part of its National Level Exercise program to promote cyber readiness nationwide. PHP has procured this game and will explore its potential for conducting a tabletop exercise (TTX) with community partners in the spring. In addition to the cyber TTX, PHP is in the process of developing a COOP (Continuity of Operations) TTX for NNPH.



PHP staff learning CyberReady TTX board game.

The PHEP program continues to coordinate with Washoe County schools (public, private and charter) to assist in developing emergency planning processes for their Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) based on Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 388.241 (formerly Senate Bill 36). PHP has attended five school emergency operations plan (EOP) meetings from July through December 2024. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) has created an EOP Workgroup to review the applicable NRS requirements, NDE guidance documents, and school EOP submissions. A representative from PHEP is a member of the workgroup and attends the meetings. Two meetings were initiated in July, but are now on hold and will resume in the near future.

Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP)/Inter-Hospital Coordinating Council (IHCC) –

The coalition continues to work on activities to address the FY25 goals and objectives, with workgroup activities set to continue throughout the fiscal year. Workgroups regarding high consequence infectious diseases, business continuity, and the Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) Plan will reconvene in January 2025.

The results from the HPP Capability Assessments and the hazard vulnerability analysis (HVA) are currently being analyzed and will be shared with the coalition upon completion. Based on a preliminary review of the Capability Assessment results, areas of improvement include recruitment, staff support, emergency credentialing, and operational continuity. Meetings are scheduled throughout December with each provider type to discuss their top priorities and activities for FY26.

Coalition members established an IV Solution Shortage workgroup to coordinate efforts in response to ongoing supply challenges affecting healthcare facilities in Washoe County. This workgroup brings together representatives from hospitals, skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), emergency medical services (EMS), public health agencies, and other key partners to ensure a collaborative, community-wide approach. Its primary focus is to assess impact, identify risks, and coordinate rationing and alternative solutions. The meetings have been ongoing since October and will continue through mid-December.

On November 11, 2024, the Callahan Fire broke out in the vicinity of Roan Trail and Galena Canyon Trail, prompting the activation of the Mutual-Aid Evacuation Agreement (MAEA) and swift evacuation of a skilled nursing facility. Due to the collaborative efforts of community partners including REMSA Health,

NeuroRestorative, Renown Health, Washoe County Emergency Management, and Regional Transportation Commission- Washoe, 21 patients were safely evacuated and re-located. This incident highlights the critical role of community relationships and effective communication in ensuring safety during emergencies.

HPP staff continue to participate in the weekly Hospital Net, a Ham Radio communications drill among hospitals in Northern Nevada and Eastern California. The purpose of the Net is to enhance redundant communications during disasters.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Oversight Program

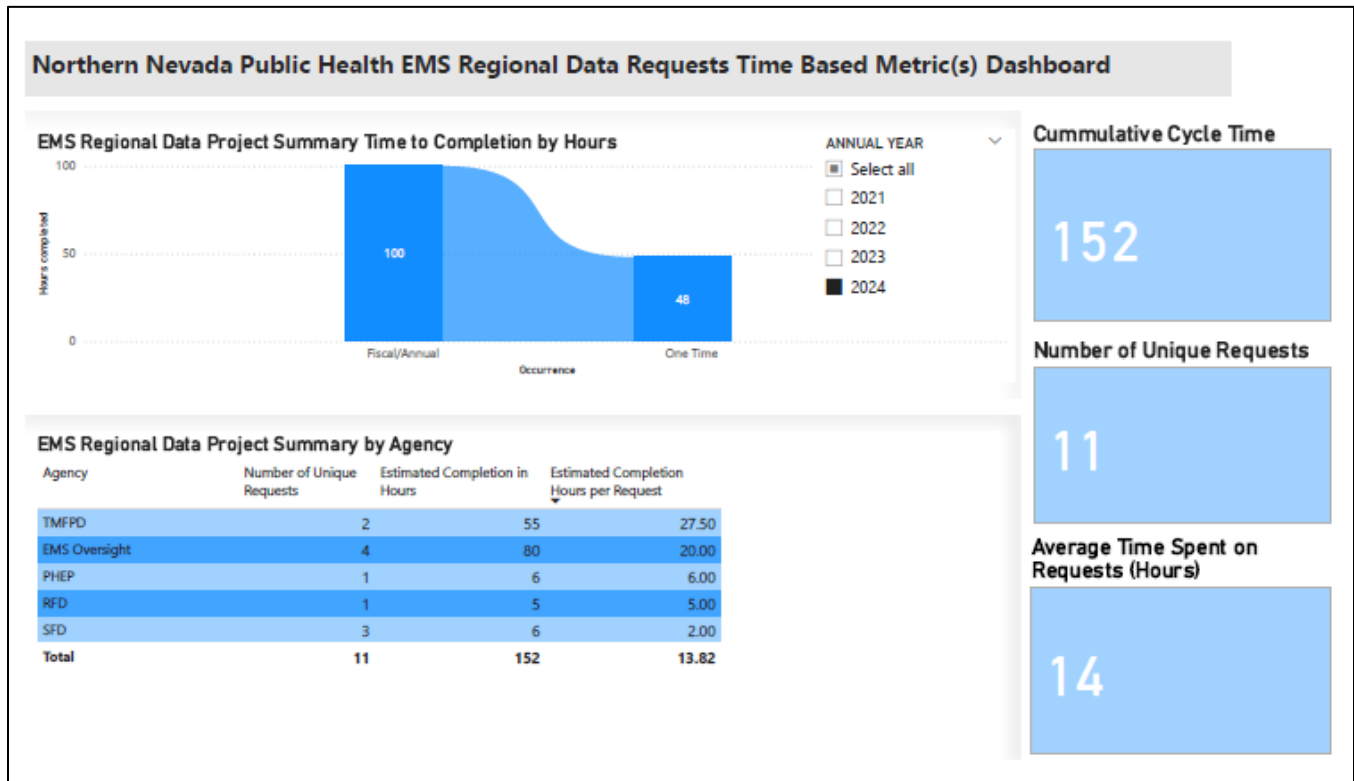
EMS Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) – The JAC has been focused on advancing the goals outlined in the Washoe County EMS Strategic Plan for 2023-2028. Partners are utilizing a Teams Dashboard tool to track objectives, many of which are already in progress. Discussions within the JAC regarding revisions to the Franchise Agreement have been paused and will continue as directed by the DBOH. The main objectives being worked on by JAC include, increasing responder safety aeromedical training with Care Flight, continuous quality improvement process, and identifying benchmarks and baselines for exposures rates among EMS responders.



NNPH Trauma Data Report – The EMS program released the most recent trends on mortality and hospitalization outcomes report for traumatic injuries that occurred in Washoe County in 2023. This annual publication highlighted demographic trends for intentional injuries among persons aged 20-54 years old, and unintentional injuries sustained among persons aged 55 years and older. Trends for substance use among people injured in 2023 for alcohol use and reports on the amount of alcohol detected. Approximately 25.7% of self-inflicted wounds reported in 2023, and 34.5% of injuries due to assaults reported had test-confirmed alcohol detection above legal limits. The associated place of injury (POI) also impacts the context of injuries as it relates to environment, detailed POI are available in the report.

EMS Data Request Dashboard – Beginning July 1, 2024, the program developed and continues to update the data requests dashboard to monitor the number of unique requests, and the types of requests received by the

EMS Oversight Program through the data request protocol on an annual basis (January 1 to December 31). The summary of the requests and time spent on requests are as follows:



REMSA Health Exemption Requests -

Table 1: REMSA Health Exemption Requests FY 2025					
Exemption	System Overload	Status 99	Weather	Other	Approved
July 2024	14	-	-	-	14
August 2024	42	-	-	-	42
September 2024	21	-	-	86*	107
October 2024	13	-	-	-	13
November 2024 ^a	10	-	-	-	10

*The "Other" exemptions were approved under the Exemptions Guidelines of declared emergency for the Davis Fire.

^aExemptions for the month are not yet finalized at the time this report is compiled and will be updated in the next month's report.

REMSA Health Call Compliance – The franchise area is divided into response zones. The response zones will have response time compliance standards for all Priority 1 calls indicated below. Due to low call volumes in the separately defined response zones B, C and D, REMSA Health compliance response will be calculated in accordance with the Amended and Restated Franchise Agreement for Ambulance Service dated February 23,

2023, as combined Zones B, C, and D for all Priority 1 calls. Table 2 shows REMSA Health's compliance rate for FY 2024.

- Zone A – REMSA Health shall ensure that **90%** of all presumptively defined life-threatening calls (Priority 1 Calls) have a response time of eight (8) minutes and 59 seconds or less within the combined Zone A areas.
- Zones B, C, and D – REMSA Health shall ensure that **90%** of all presumptively defined life-threatening calls (Priority 1 Calls) collectively have a response time of; 15minutes and 59 seconds or less for the combined Zone B areas, 20 minutes and 59 seconds or less for the combined Zone C areas, and 30 minutes and 59 seconds or less for the combined Zone D areas.

Table 2. REMSA Health Percentage of Compliant Priority 1 Responses by Zones FY 2025		
Month*	Zone A	Zone B, C, and D
July 2024	90	96
August 2024	92	91
September 2024	91	95
October 2024	91	90
November 2024 ^a	89	89
Fiscal Year-To-Date*,^a	91	92

*Fiscal Year-to-date is the percentage calculated using the sum of all to-date "Chargeable Late Responses" divided by "Compliance Calculate Responses".

^aExemptions for the month are not yet finalized at the time this report is compiled and will be updated in the next month's report.

Community Services Department (CSD) – Memo Review: The EMS Oversight Program staff reviews and analyzes project applications received from the City of Reno Housing and Neighborhood Development and the Planning and Building Division of the Washoe County Community Services Department, providing feedback as needed. During November, the program staff received and reviewed three (3) applications and did not have any concerns that would affect EMS response.

Mass Gatherings/Special Events: The EMS Oversight Program received and reviewed zero (0) applications for Mass Gatherings/Special Events in November. EMS and Environmental Health Services (EHS) staff are working closely to remediate and streamline communication process with the Community Services Department (CSD) to ensure NNPH is notified of all potential mass gatherings/special events approved by any county department. Processes between departments are being discussed to better support services and improve public health safety.

Vital Statistics

Vital Statistics has continued to serve the public through the mail, online, and in person. Program staff also submit weekly records on decedent information for HIV/AIDS and a monthly update to senior services.

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Table 1: Number of Transactions for Birth and Death Records- November 2024

November	In Person	Mail	Online	Total
Birth	666	24	390	1080
Death	1434	8	488	1930
Total	2100	32	878	3010

Table 2: Number of Records Processed by Vital Statistics Office- FY 2025

		2024						2025						Total
		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
Birth														
	Registrations	450	532	473	502	411								2368
	Corrections	93	71	75	55	37								331
Death														
	Registrations	478	437	478	481	447								2321
	Corrections	7	6	13	8	10								44