

**Population Health Division
Division Director Staff Report
Board Meeting Date: August 28, 2025**

DATE: August 8, 2025

TO: District Board of Health

FROM: Nancy Diao, ScD, PHD Director
775-328-2443; ndiao@nmph.org

SUBJECT: **Population Health** – Epidemiology, Statistics and Informatics, Public Health Preparedness, Emergency Medical Services, Vital Statistics, Sexual Health Investigations and Outreach, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

Epidemiology Program

Respiratory Virus Surveillance –

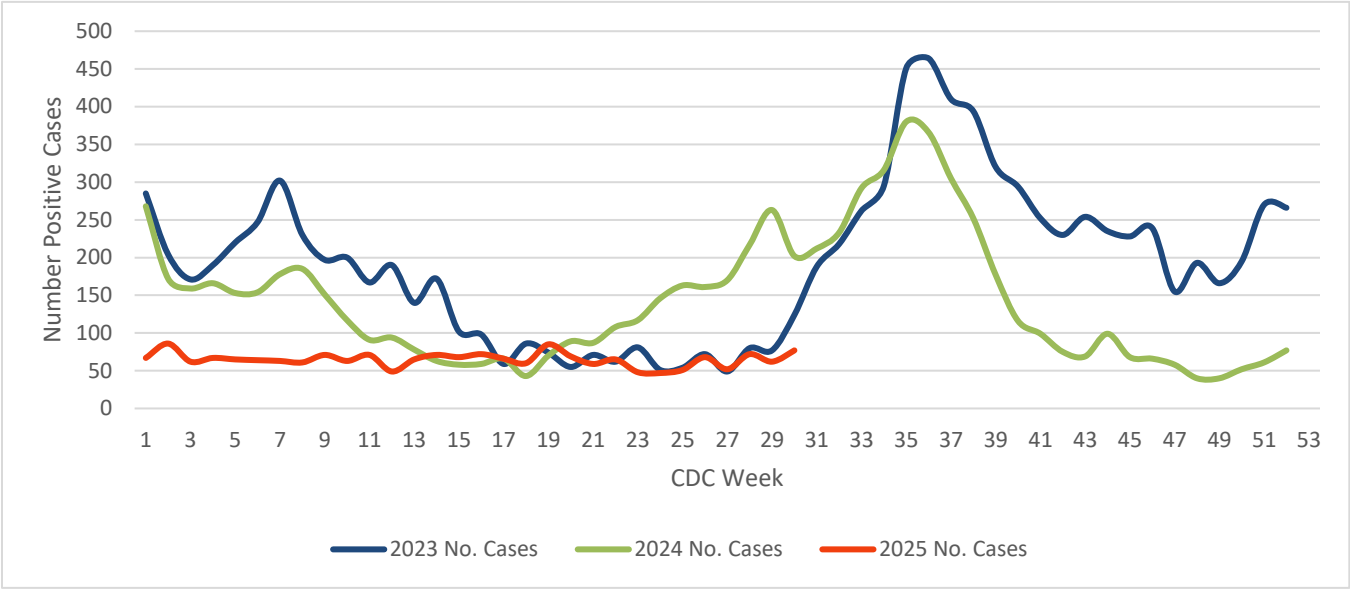
Influenza-like Illness –Through the months of June-September, ILI activities are not updated but weekly updates continue for the COVID data, including number of weekly new cases, average new cases per day, cases/100K per week, weekly cases/100K, and weekly hospitalizations. The program concluded the weekly respiratory report for the 2024-2025 season on Friday, May 23, 2025, and a comprehensive season summary was published in July.

The respiratory dashboard can be found on the link below, with tabulations for COVID-19 available in the navigation pane to track the specified indicators. COVID-19 sections are divided into COVID-Overall, COVID-Race, and COVID-Age & Sex:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/5856e5af35274420960675bfb2b65c94>

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) – During the month of July, 292 new COVID-19 cases were reported among Washoe County residents (data as of 07/29/2025). Figure 1 provides an overview of the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Washoe County by MMWR week following calendar years starting in 2023. Cases of COVID-19 are currently low and stable in the month of July and have been averaging less than 20 cases by 100k residents per week since MMWR week 49.

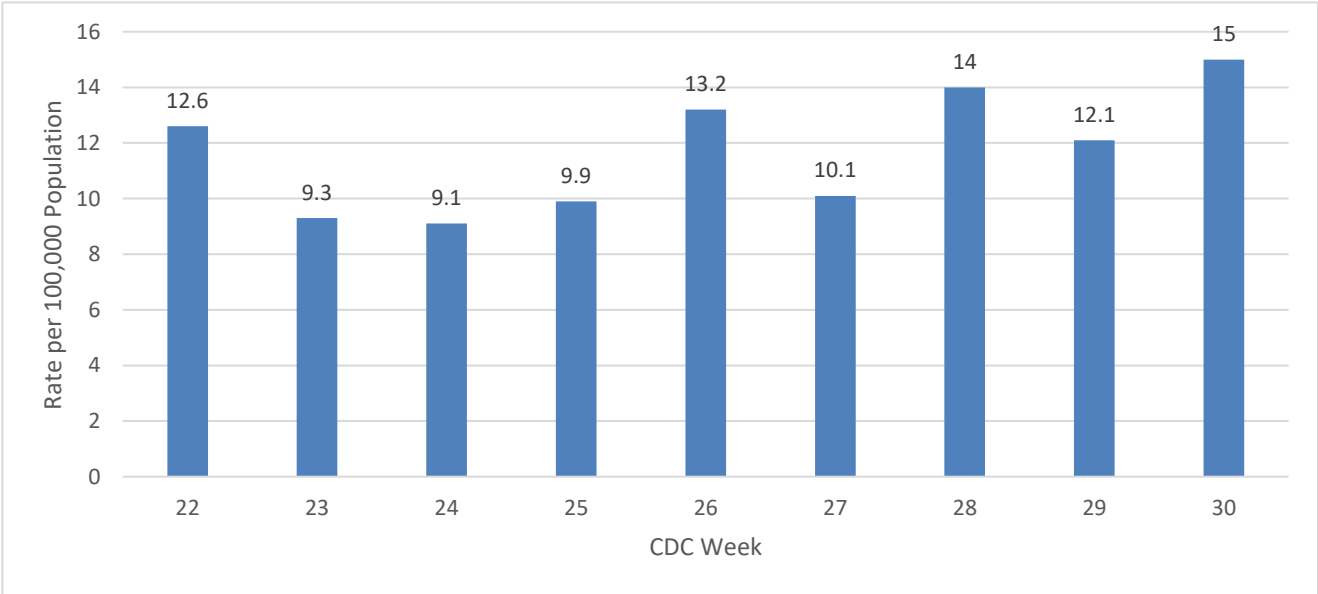
Fig 1. Total Number of COVID-19 Cases by Week of Report Date in Washoe County from 2023 through 2025†



† There is no MMWR week 53 in 2023 or 2024. Note: Data are displayed by calendar year.

Figure 2 illustrates the number of new cases by report date per 100,000 population over a nine-week period spanning May 25, 2025, through July 26, 2025. As of MMWR week 30, Washoe County received reports of 15 new cases per 100,000 population.

**Fig 2. Newly Reported COVID-19 Cases Per 100,000 population by MMWR Week
May 25, 2025 – July 26, 2025, Washoe County**

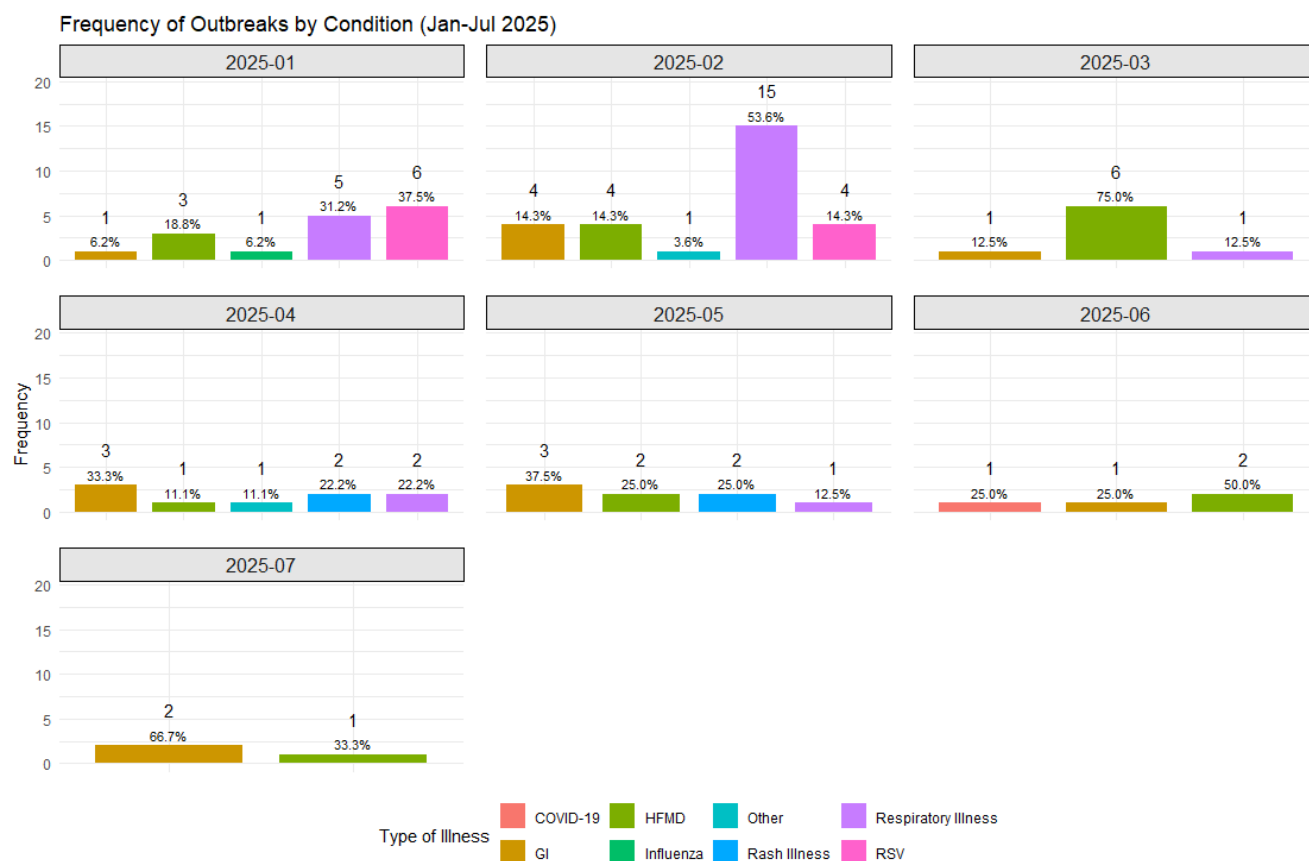


Outbreaks – There have been 3 newly declared outbreaks in July 2025; zero (0) influenza confirmed, zero (0) respiratory illness of unconfirmed etiology, zero (0) RSV, two (2) gastrointestinal, zero (0) COVID-19, one (1) hand, foot, and mouth disease, zero (0) rash illness of unconfirmed etiology, and zero (0) other.

Table 1: Number of Outbreaks Declared by Type and Month, 2025												
Type	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gastrointestinal Illness	1	4	1	3	3	1	2					
Respiratory Illness	11	19	1	2	1	0	0					
Influenza Confirmed	1	0	0	0	0	0	0					
COVID-19 Confirmed	0	0	0	0	0	1	0					
Rash Illness	3	4	6	3	4	2	1					
Other	0	1	0	1	0	0	0					
Total	16	28	8	9	8	4	3					

Note1: Data obtained as of July 29, 2025, at the time of this report, and will be revised in the next report if there are updates. Note2: Respiratory illnesses include RSV outbreaks. Note3: 'Other' in February 2025 and April 2025 includes outbreaks with multiple etiologies.

Fig 3. Monthly Outbreaks by Condition from January 1, 2025 -July 29, 2025, in Washoe County



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/phd/communicable-diseases-and-epidemiology/epi-news/index.php>.

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

- **2025 Q2 Reporting and Stats:** This Epi News is a quarterly report published after data collection was completed for the 2nd quarter of 2025 (April - June). It includes summary statistics of reportable conditions by case count and the percentage change compared to previous 5 years in the same quarter. This data provides information relevant to the public about the type of disease investigations and landscape of cases in Washoe County, and it releases details regarding any trends in the rise or fall of incidence among residents.
- **Legionellosis:** This Epi News provides an in-depth overview of a condition caused by bacteria of the genus *Legionella*. Most legionellosis cases result from inhalation of aerosolized water particles contaminated with the infectious agent. Outbreaks are typically linked to complex water systems, but exposures can occur from many different types of water sources when people breathe in contaminated water particles. Some types of *Legionellae*, such as *L. longbeachae*, are associated with soil or compost, where the bacteria can flourish in moist, warm environments that are inhaled during activities such as gardening. The purpose of this publication was to highlight the common risk factors for improved awareness and prevention, as well as highlight the symptoms associated with the disease. Additional information on treatment and testing is available for provider knowledge as well.

General Communicable Diseases – The EpiTrax reporting system is continuously receiving feedback and updates. Several validation processes are in place to verify reporting is accurate. During July 2025, there were 160 positive labs reported, with 36% 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 patient to patient 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 built the front end, secure login portal, and migrated existing data that the NNPH'S Epidemiology Program has tracked since 2018. Technology Services finalized Phase I of the XDRO database, and the HAI Coordinator epidemiologist has been entering CPO and *C. auris* cases reported since July 2024. Area hospitals have been contacted to explore the logistics required on electronic feeds of admissions data. Current user agreements are approved for use and have been distributed to hospital partners. The HAI Coordinator and tech services are currently working with five hospitals to officially integrate, and one hospital has been onboarded successfully.

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. 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 worked with CDC to help design and implement the database. The current data system building process is temporarily on halt because the Epidemiology team was notified 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 were explored, with REDCap selected as the new database system to house FD3. REDCap, known as "Research Electronic Data Capture," is a secure, web-based application used by researchers to build and manage online surveys and databases. The Nevada Department of Health and Human services are members of the national consortium and administer its usage as an open-source tool for robust data collection. Migration of the database is underway. The Epidemiology Program met with several local and state health departments around the country for live demonstrations of supplemental data collection instruments to better understand their application and use. This cross-jurisdiction collaborative provided an overview of the migration potential. Epidemiologists explored the REDCap Shared Library and received metadata from state health departments to retrofit existing surveys for exploratory use in Washoe County, leading to enhanced disease surveillance and epidemiologic investigation. There are currently several conditions (e.g., salmonella) and their associated Case Report Forms (CRFs) programmed into the system, with modification and testing underway to verify operability.

Animal Bite Reporting – Bites from rabies-susceptible animals are a reportable condition under NAC 441A. The Epidemiology Program is responsible for tracking potential exposures to rabies for humans, which requires intricate coordination within and between Washoe County agencies to (A) increase accessibility of reporting to NNPH, (B) streamline communication channels between interdepartmental stakeholders, and (C) improve capacity through electronic data capture, the Epidemiology Program input the baseline metadata into REDCap. The team modified the Case Report Form (CRF) for people with suspected exposures to rabies, standardized programmatic metrics, and expanded data capture for more rapid and accurate disease surveillance. This form has already undergone several rounds of testing to verify usability and validate workflows. Epidemiologists selected the first round of variables for tracking caseloads and outcomes, and the team is working in collaboration with the Statistics and Informatics Program to link dummy data to an internal dashboard as a prototype. The team is also adapting automatic alerts to local needs, resulting in immediate notification to the program of incoming reports stratified by risk. This system creates the first, singular repository of a condition-specific data lake that can be modified to serve additional programmatic needs for animal bite reports, including immediate notification to users about the status of their report, information on appropriate follow up, and linkage of tracking measures for relevant stakeholders. Moreover, the syncing of incoming animal bite reports across appropriate agencies aims to reduce duplication of data entry and exchange, allowing the Epidemiology Program to triage investigations based on severity via conditional logic, which improves communication across agencies. The overall objective is to expedite comprehensive public health response for timely assessment of prophylaxis recommendations, resulting in near-real-time analysis for cross-agency management.

Sexual Health Investigations and Outreach

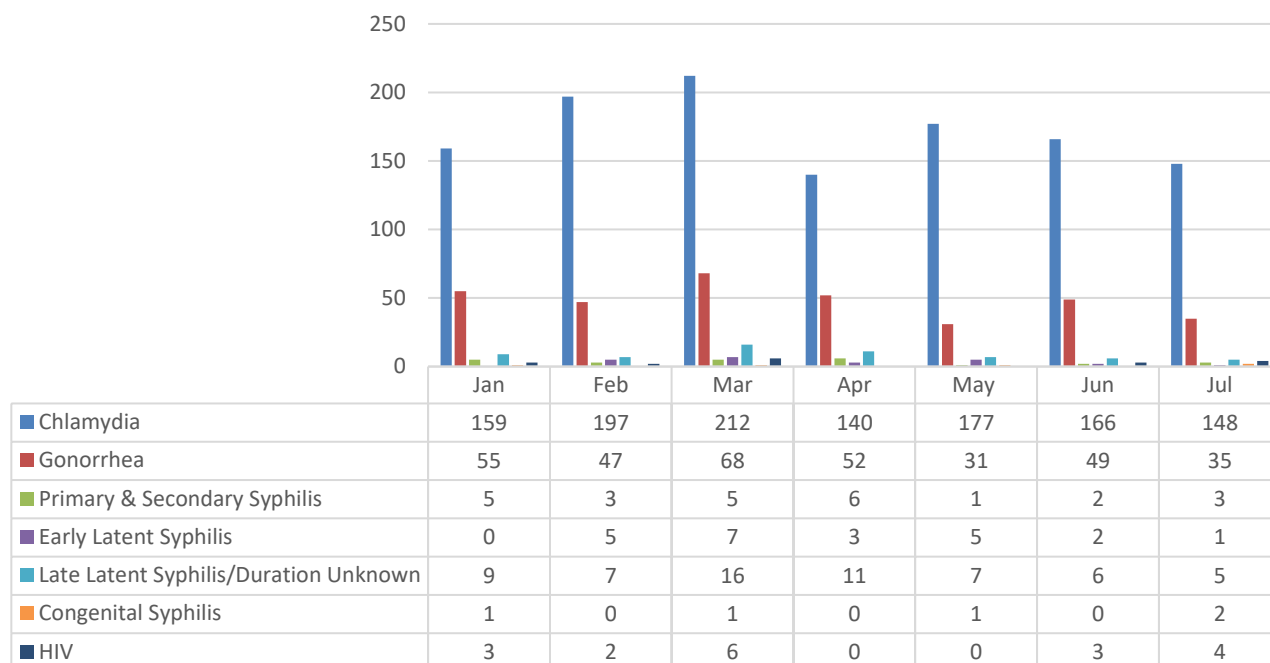
The Sexual Health Investigations and Outreach Program continues to work with the CCHS clinic on process flow on testing and treatment for cases and their partners. Staff are also conducting ongoing data quality assurance activities. Recent activities include a STI case de-duplication project with the state STI program and statewide partners for the chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis cases from 2021-2024. Additionally, year-end reports for HIV are in progress. This report will cover HIV prevention and surveillance activities from August

1, 2024 through May 31, 2025. The timeframe of these grants has changed from a calendar year due to updates at the CDC.

The program Epidemiologist presented a congenital syphilis case summary for the statewide Congenital Syphilis Review Board (CSRB) on July 17. This group reviews summaries of congenital syphilis cases statewide to discover trends among the cases, with an emphasis on the pregnant cases. Demographics, aspects related to social determinants of health such as access and engagement with healthcare, housing status, insurance status, substance use, and other factors are reviewed. Information is derived from case interviews and extraction from medical records. Trends among cases are identified and policy change implications and suggestions are discussed amongst local and state partners.

Table 1 summarizes cases reported on the calendar year through July 2025. Case counts are dynamic depending on stage of investigations. Most chlamydia and gonorrhea investigations are closed within 30 days of report and syphilis investigations within 60 days of report.

Table 1: Reported Sexually Transmitted Infections & HIV in Washoe County, 2025
(Preliminary Data)



Public Health Preparedness (PHP) Program

The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) and Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP) collaborated to develop and conduct the Beta Burn community radiation exercise, held on July 22, 2025. This exercise was designed to test and strengthen local emergency response capabilities during a radiological incident.

Beta Burn was conducted in two phases. The first phase took place in the morning and consisted of a tabletop exercise followed by a functional exercise at the Regional Emergency Operations Center. Local responders including public health, fire, law enforcement, EMS, hospitals, and other partners worked through a simulated radiological dispersal device (RDD) scenario in which a car bomb detonated in front of Reno City Hall. Participants used the *Washoe County Radiation Responders Guide*, which aligns with the federal "First 100 Minutes" RDD guidance, to establish incident command, assess hazards, and implement protective actions for the community. This phase guided responders through all five phases of a radiation emergency response and included hands-on monitoring of radiological sources.

The second phase was a functional exercise conducted at the Regional Public Safety Training Center. This scenario involved a vehicle crashing into a school, catching fire, and releasing a radiological source, thereby contaminating the surrounding area. Responders applied the procedures practiced during the morning session, again using the five-phase response framework from the *Radiation Responders Guide*. They established a unified command and managed the dynamic situation in real time, reinforcing the importance of coordination and effective communication under pressure.

Beta Burn provided a realistic opportunity to evaluate regional preparedness for radiological emergencies and practice integrated response operations. It underscored the value of established protocols and interagency collaboration, while also identifying key lessons in decision-making, resource management, and public safety. Feedback from the exercise will inform future training efforts and strengthen community resilience against CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive) threats in our region.

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is being coordinated to support the upcoming CCHS Back to School Immunizations Clinics on August 9 and 16, 2025. The MRC, along with CERT and Battleborn volunteers, will perform various duties, including line management, directional guidance, and recovery station (medical MRC only). PHP staff will further support the clinics by assisting with set-up, breakdown, and working the events.

On July 31, 2025, PHP staff in partnership with Washoe County IT/Tech Services conducted the CyberReady board game developed by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), simulating response actions to a cyber event. This will be the foundation for facilitating the game as a tabletop exercise (TTX) with departments throughout Washoe County and NNPH. Cybersecurity is consistently identified hazard/threat within federal and local jurisdictions

PHP continues to hold monthly meetings with jurisdictional PHP partners, including Central Nevada Health District, Nevada County (California), and the Quad Counties. These meetings facilitate relationship-building, open communication, and collaborative efforts. The most recent meeting took place on July 17, 2025.

The State hosted a quarterly Planning, Organizing, Equipping, Training, and Exercising (POETE) meeting on July 23, 2025. The meeting primarily consists of a review of the POETE calendar, completed by all of Nevada's health districts which lists planned exercises, trainings, etc.

PHP continues to represent the Health District on Washoe County schools' Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) committees per NRS 388.241. To date, PHP staff attended (3) three meetings in July 2025.

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

On July 16, 2025, HPP staff participated in the Great Reno Balloon Race Tabletop Exercise, which focused on various scenarios resulting in a mass casualty incident at the event. The exercise included a discussion of the Multi-Casualty Incident Plan and the role of the Medical Service Unit in coordinating with healthcare partners during response efforts. Participation in exercises like this is essential for strengthening coordination and communication with external partners and supporting a more streamlined emergency response.

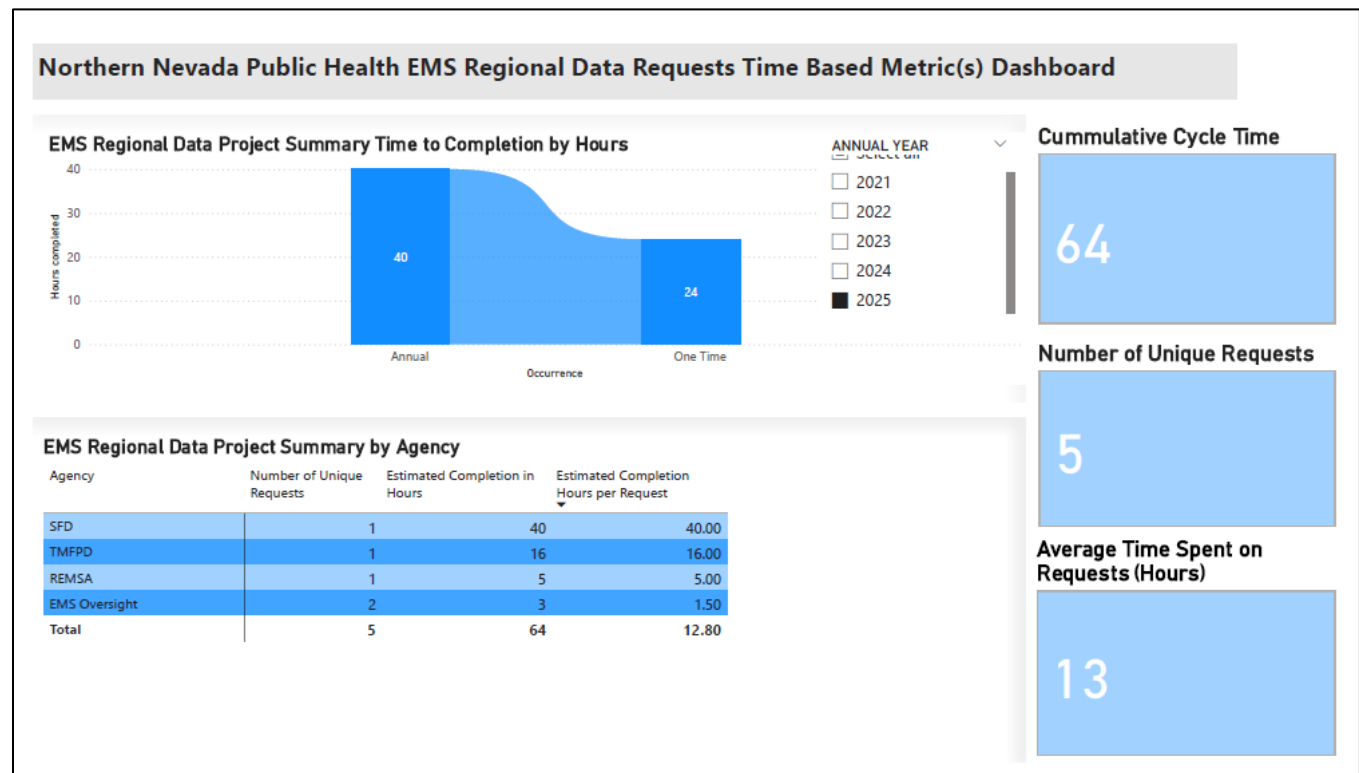
In August, IHCC workgroups will meet to discuss strategies for addressing coalition members' top priorities. Work on identified activities will continue throughout the remainder of the fiscal year.

To close out FY25, IHCC presented a video to the District Board of Health (DBOH) on July 24, 2025, highlighting the coalition's efforts and ongoing commitment to disaster response and community resilience.

HPP staff continue to participate in the weekly Hospital Net ham radio communications drill, which includes hospitals across Northern Nevada and Eastern California. This ongoing activity supports redundant communication capabilities that are essential for effective coordination during disasters.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Oversight Program

EMS Data Request Dashboard – For July 2025, the program received two data requests.



EMS QA/QI Project – The EMS program conducted a Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) assessment using the Northern Nevada Trauma Registry to evaluate patient transports based on Washoe County Trauma Protocol criteria. The project aimed to quantify the number of patients transported to the appropriate level of care based on clinical indicators. Findings from the assessment were presented at the July JAC meeting, and feedback from fire and EMS partners was used to inform improvements to future reporting methodologies.

REMSA Health Exemption Requests -

Table 1: REMSA Health Exemption Requests FY 2026					
Exemption	System Overload	Status 99	Weather	Other	Approved
July 2025	1				1
Total	1				1

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 2026		
Month*	Zone A	Zone B, C, and D
July 2025	91%	96%
Fiscal Year-To-Date*	91%	96%

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

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 July, the program staff received and reviewed six (6) applications and did not have any concerns that would affect EMS response.

Mass Gatherings/Special Events: The EMS Oversight Program received (1) one and reviewed zero (0) applications for Mass Gatherings/Special Events in July.

Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention (CDIP) Program

Power Up Kids – Staff have successfully partnered with the Boys and Girls Club (BGC) of Truckee Meadows to deliver SNAP-Ed programming through the Power Up Kids Program. Power Up Kids is a school-based program that educates students about the importance of healthy eating and being active. Evidence-based curricula are being implemented at two BGC affiliated sites: Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada and Lemmon Valley Elementary. At Pinecrest, the team is facilitating two curricula, Pick a Better Snack (PABS) for K-2nd grade students and Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness (CHFFF) for 3rd-4th grade students. At the Lemmon Valley site, the team is implementing PABS with their K-3rd grade group. Across both locations, approximately 100 students are being reached through this summer's SNAP-Ed programming. This marks the first time the SNAP-Ed team has offered summer programming, a strategic expansion beyond the traditional school-year model to promote healthy behaviors year-round. Summer programming will conclude the first week of August.

Healthy Corner Store Program Evaluation – The Healthy Corner Store Program, launched in June 2021, aims to increase healthier food options in neighborhoods located far from grocery stores. In collaboration with local store owners, the program supports corner stores in offering a wider variety of canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, with a long-term goal of carrying fresh produce. In May, staff partnered with the Larson Institute at UNR to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Healthy Corner Store (HCS) Program in response to ongoing challenges with store recruitment and program expansion. While the program has demonstrated early successes, recent efforts to onboard new store partners have stalled. Phase one of the evaluation is focused on gathering meaningful feedback from key stakeholders through informant interviews and focus groups. Six interviews were conducted with store owners (both participating and non-participating), seven community partners participated in a focus group, 15 community members took part in one-on-one interviews, and 33 community surveys were completed. Incentives were provided to all participants in appreciation of their time. Phase two of the evaluation will include in-depth analysis of the collected data to identify key themes and barriers. The goal is to generate actionable solutions to revitalize the program, informing improvements in outreach, onboarding processes, and overall store and community engagement to support long-term sustainability.

Washoe Suicide Prevention Alliance & Statewide Initiatives – The CDIP team coordinated meetings of the Washoe Suicide Prevention Alliance (WSPA) with The Armory Project (TAP) on July 24 and July 30 to explore a potential partnership. TAP is a nationally recognized, evidence-based suicide prevention initiative that engages firearm owners and retailers in efforts to reduce suicide. The TAP initiative has been successfully expanded into five additional states and offers dedicated funding, training, and resources. The purpose of these discussions is to implement a TAP pilot project in Washoe County in collaboration with WSPA-affiliated firearm retailers. The goal is to establish a strong foundation for a broader statewide initiative focused on suicide prevention and temporary firearm storage, with support from partners such as the Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention and Veterans Services staff for expansion beyond Washoe County.

Staff continue to actively participate in the Nevada Suicide Prevention Task Force in preparation for the statewide Illuminate Nevada campaign launching in September during National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The campaign encourages Nevadans to illuminate their homes in designated colors during Suicide Prevention Week as a visible show of support for individuals experiencing a suicidal crisis or those grieving a loss to suicide. Outreach efforts are currently underway to engage the chambers of commerce, local governments, and key stakeholders to encourage broad community participation.

CDIP led the coordination and finalization of media deliverables for the Renown “Better Together” Community Grant, awarded to the Washoe Suicide Prevention Alliance (WSPA), with Nevada Urban Indians serving as the fiscal agent. The goal of the grant is to educate the public and distribute suicide prevention outreach materials to the community, including at local firearm retailers and gun shows. Deliverables include a custom WSPA-branded Suicide Prevention Gun Cleaning Mat and a two-month suicide prevention media campaign, developed in partnership with Charter – Spectrum Reach, scheduled to run from September through October.

Falls Prevention Awareness Activities – Staff are supporting planning efforts with the Nevada Goes Falls Free Coalition in preparation for Falls Prevention Awareness Month, Week, and Day this September. Additionally, staff are coordinating a Senior Falls Prevention Screening Event at Washoe County Senior Services.

Tobacco Control / Youth Prevention Activities – The CDIP team continued collaborating with Bethel AME Church and Pastor Deborah Whitlock-Lax to develop an educational video series focused on tobacco and vaping prevention. The series features filmed interviews covering topics such as the impact of menthol and other flavored tobacco products, prevention strategies, and cessation resources for both youth and adults. This initiative is intended to provide a more sustainable and resource-efficient way to educate the community. Once filming is complete, the videos will be shared at various events hosted or attended by Bethel AME Church, as well as through their social media platforms.

CDIP staff developed a Vape Shop Assessment tool to assess and document the availability, placement, marketing, pricing, and variety of emerging nicotine and vaping products across Washoe County. The purpose of the scan is to better understand how these products are promoted and sold in retail environments, monitor regulatory compliance, identify emerging product trends, and evaluate community exposure, particularly in areas that may be disproportionately affected by tobacco-related harms. The findings will support public health planning, policy development, and targeted education efforts. In preparation for conducting the scans, which will take place August through October, staff also began compiling a comprehensive list of vape shops in the region.

To support informed and cohesive discussions with WCSD and other community organizations who serve youth populations during the 2025–2026 school year, staff developed a set of five semi-structured interview questions. These questions are designed to gather stakeholder perspectives on youth vaping and emerging nicotine products, with the goal of informing future education, outreach, and prevention strategies.

Staff continued collaborating with statewide partners on the implementation of the Attracting Addiction Nevada Initiative, which aims to:

- Educate adults on the predatory tactics used by the tobacco industry to target youth
- Raise awareness about the dangers of smoking and vaping flavored tobacco products, particularly their impact on young people
- Prevent youth and adults from initiating tobacco use
- Support quitting of all flavored tobacco products

During the past month, staff updated the initiative's educational brochures by revising data, refining messaging, and refreshing the color scheme. The updated design improves clarity and accessibility, making it easier for parents and other adults to understand the risks associated with flavored vaping products.



Attracting Addiction

ADDICTION isn't Sweet

Behind the Sweet Flavors:
Uncovering the Hidden Dangers of
Flavored Nicotine Products

Menthol: Easier To Start, Harder To Quit

Menthol is often seen as safer, which contributes to it being one of the most popular nicotine product flavors on the market. It is heavily marketed to youth, women, LGBTQ+ communities, and racial and ethnic minorities, especially Black individuals.



Flavors Draw Youth To Nicotine Products

There are over 15,000 vape flavors on the market, which is 10 to 300 times more than your favorite brand of ice cream. And the tobacco industry keeps adding more.

Product	Estimated Number of Flavors
Flavored Vapes	Over 15,000
Baskin Robbins Ice Cream	Over 1,400
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream	Approximately 87
Häagen-Dazs	Over 50



90% of Youth Who Vape Choose Flavored Products

Flavored nicotine products, especially sweet and fruity ones, make tobacco more addictive and appealing, driving youth experimentation.

Source: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

CDIP staff partnered with Go Mart, a local convenience store/gas station, to revamp the storefront with healthier messaging. As part of the revamp, the store owner agreed to remove over ten (10) tobacco advertisements from the storefront. In exchange, NNPH staff worked with a local sign company to design signage that would highlight healthier items available in the store and give the store an updated look. This is the third storefront revamp CDIP staff has completed in collaboration with local store owners to reduce youth exposure to tobacco-related advertisements and price promotions.



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