

Overview of Public Health Priorities, Challenges, and Policy Considerations of the State and Regional Health Authorities and Districts

Julia Peek, MHA, CPM, Deputy Administrator

April 8, 2024 – Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

ABOUT DPBH

MISSION

To protect, promote, and improve the physical and behavioral health and safety of all people in Nevada, equitably and regardless of circumstances, so they can live their safest, longest, healthiest, and happiest life.

VISION

A Nevada where preventable health and safety issues no longer impact the opportunity for all people to live life in the best possible health.

PURPOSE

To make everyone's life healthier, happier, longer, and safer.



ALL IN GOOD HEALTH.

Public Health Workforce

Successes

- [NVhealthforce.org](https://nvhealthforce.org)
 - Updated regularly for scholarships, job descriptions, and job opportunities.
- Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG):
 - Staff increase IT capacity, Public Health Preparedness, and Office of State Epidemiology.
 - Subgrants support various staff positions for nonprofits, health districts, and counties.
 - Contract staff have been hired to fulfill fiscal and support for PHIG objectives.
- American Rescue Plan Act Awards:
 - Epidemiologist and Biostatistician pipeline
 - Health care; public health workforce scholarships
 - Health care workforce pipeline (Douglas, Community Health Workers, Lactation Consultants, Certified Medical Assistants)
- Internal programs to retain our staff:
 - Seeking mechanisms for scholarships for advanced degrees for public health related employees
 - Certification programs and skill enhancement courses for DHHS employees

Challenges

- Maintaining the good work done with ARPA and COVID funding
 - Ex: Program specific projects (NOMHE, diversity, immunizations, epidemiology; workforce pipeline)
- Recruiting and retaining state staff



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Preventing Infectious Disease



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Epidemiology and contact tracing are the front line of finding and mitigating infectious disease.
- Federal funds for the epidemiology workforce is historically uncertain and always under a certain amount of flux.
- Emergencies or outbreaks result in increased federal funding and is used to build the epidemiology workforce so that personnel resources are available to provide a response. However, it is difficult and ineffective to onboard staff and provide the necessary training in the midst of an outbreak. The front line needs to be ready in advance of the emergency.
- When the funding sunsets and the larger workforce is lost, it leaves the limited sustained workforce burned out and unable to respond effectively.
- This boom-and-bust cycle results in a workforce that has less experience, training and historical/institutional knowledge.

Interoperability



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Recent upgrade to Nevada's Vital Record information system supports interoperability with Clark County and Washoe County coroners' office systems. Plans are in progress to expand this interoperability to include other information systems within the Division.
 - Evaluating interoperability with other partners including rural county coroner's offices and federal agencies like the Social Security Administration.
- The Health Data Lake project includes modern cloud technologies to gain better access to critical data for predictive analysis, reporting, and improved data quality.
 - Data governance policy is required to ensure proper data sharing and security standards are met.
- EpiTrax replaced NBS as the State of Nevada's disease reporting system in 2022. This allowed for improvements in data exchange between DPBH, local health authorities, and the CDC, but issues of interoperability remain between entities such as Southern Nevada Health District and Nevada State Public Health Laboratory. System improvements are being explored to facilitate connections between systems.

Senate Bill(SB)118



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- DPBH is allocating all funds directly to the health districts and counties unless a county wants DPBH to spend on their behalf (i.e., to a non-profit in their county).
- Agreements are in process with the three health districts and the counties to facilitate the fund transfer in early SFY 26.
- DPBH is not using any SB 118 funds internally.
- DPBH is working in tandem with the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO), health district and county leadership, and public health stakeholders to further define what non-categorical sustainable public health funding could look like for Nevadans.
 - Opportunity to allow some portion of funds to be utilized for statewide efforts
 - Opportunity to have carveout for tribal health partners in the future

Healthy People 2030



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Healthy People 2030 Objectives are mentioned throughout the Silver State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)
<https://dpbh.nv.gov/About/PHIS/>
- Examples include:
 - Social Determinants of Health
 - Increase the Health Literacy of the Population
 - Access to Health Care
 - Increasing Access to Oral Health Care Services
 - Mental Health and Substance Use
 - Increasing Proportion of Children with Mental Health Problems Who Get Treatment



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

CONTACT INFORMATION

Julia Peek, MHA, CPM,
Deputy Administrator
Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Department of Health and Human
Services
jpeek@health.nv.gov



ACRONYMS

- ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act
- CDC – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- DHHS - Department of Health and Human Services
- DPBH – Division of Public and Behavioral Health
- NACO – Nevada Association of Counties
- NOMHE – Nevada Office of Minority Health and Equity
- PHIG - Public Health Infrastructure Grant
- SB – Senate Bill
- SFY – State Fiscal Year
- SHIP – Silver State Health Improvement Plan
- VRS – Vital Records System