



ROAD TO RECOVERY: Moving to a New Normal

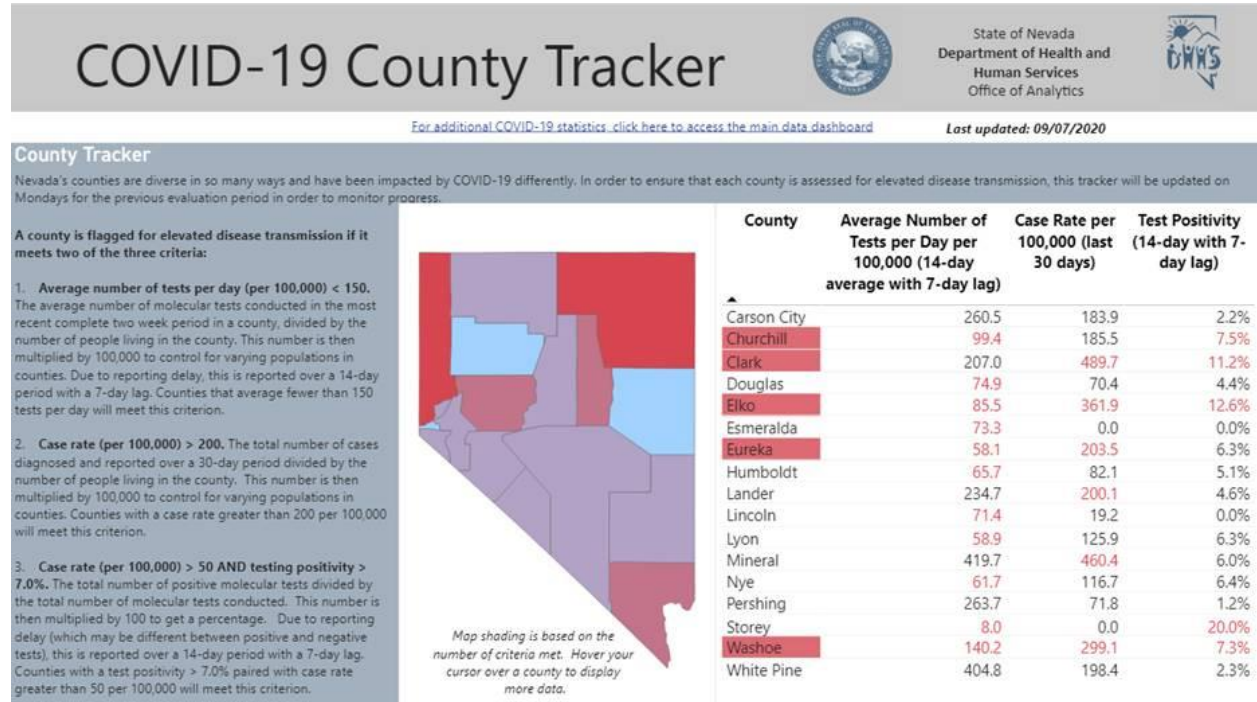


Nye County Jurisdictional Assessment and Action Plan

September 28, 2020

Overall Assessment:

According to the most recent data maintained by Nevada DHHS, Nye County has not been flagged for elevated disease transmission for the last three weeks:



Bars, pubs, taverns, breweries, distilleries, and wineries (“liquor establishments”) in rural areas of Nye County have been reopened for almost six with no showing of an overall increase in COVID cases or any cases attributable to these establishments.

Nye County remains in the red for average tests completed but there are two probable reasons for this:

Reliance on Deep Nasal Pharyngeal Tests

Although the county has had opportunities to conduct mass testing using the popular self-administered shallow swab test, we have opted against this common practice. As indicated during the last Task Force meeting, Nye County has seen several instances of false negatives obtained after a shallow swab from patients who had initially and subsequently tested positive using the deep nasal-pharyngeal test. This was a difficult public health decision to make since our residents are: 1) eager to reopen; and 2) desirous to utilize the more comfortable and less invasive testing method. Rather than “cooking the books” by utilizing the unreliable shallow test to increase our testing numbers, the county has opted to continue using the deep nasal-pharyngeal test to avoid promoting a false sense of security that comes with a false negative test. The Nye County Sheriff’s Office recently issued a [video press release](#) informing the public of this policy.

Nye County Residents testing in Clark County

Because of our proximity to Clark County, many Nye County residents work in Las Vegas and/or decide to test in Las Vegas. Clark County becomes a more appealing venue for testing for residents who seek privacy and confidentiality outside of the relatively small town of Pahrump. Also, Clark County utilizes the more user-friendly shallow swab test which makes testing in Nye County less enticing in comparison. Nye County has been actively seeking to obtain consistent and reliable information on residency status of COVID tests that may have been conducted on Nye residents in Clark County but has thus far been unsuccessful.

Critical Statewide Metrics:

Hospital Capacity:

- Desert View Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital located in Pahrump. Currently there is no ICU or Med Surge beds occupied by COVID patients and the hospital remains at approx. 65-70% capacity. With no more than two COVID-19 patients admitted at any time with other co-morbidity related issues
- The hospital is equipped with ventilators; however, none are in use by COVID patients.
- Desert View reports staffing models that are adequate for provided services and they continue to assess their staff daily before entering the facility. They have further limited access of non-patients into the hospital.
- Medications and treatments remain unremarkable with most patients released to self-quarantine at home.
- Desert View reports that PPE supplies are adequate and without issue.

Access to Personal Protective Equipment:

- Nye County Department of Emergency Management continues to manage a sufficient supply of PPE with prioritization to emergency responders, medical providers, testing facilities, long-term, skilled and assisted living facilities, government operations, and target hot spots.
- Nye County Emergency Management is enacting a plan to train EMTs throughout the County to assist with potential COVID-19 vaccinations. We are also early ordering supplies in support of this mission.

Testing Capacity:

- Nye County continues to lead in the rural counties with over 6700 tests completed. The completed test reference does not include Nye County residents who have tested outside of Nye County. Nye County continues to seek information from
- To help ensure accuracy of our testing results, Nye County conducts only deep nasal-pharyngeal tests with appropriate recommended swab kits as detailed above.
- Our testing continues through private vendors by both appointment and a regularly scheduled drive- thru center located in Pahrump. Additional testing is completed at the hospital, medical clinics, and doctor's offices.
- Nye County Department of Emergency Management regularly receives and distributes State supplied nasal-pharyngeal testing kits to the testing centers upon request.
- Nye County has moved the testing location on certain dates from the testing provider's medical office to a more public, and visible location (Walmart parking lot).

- Nye County has noted a general decline in testing locally. In addition to the reasons outlined above, Nye County residents seem to be suffering from testing fatigue.

Case Investigation and Contact Tracing:

- Nye County's contact tracing and case investigation had previously highlighted areas of concern for COVID-19 case spikes. Our current trajectory highlights our successes in mitigating these spikes as no specific areas have been identified in the past 10 days.
- Nye County believes that mitigation is essential to our success in managing COVID-19 spread and potential outbreaks. Therefore, Nye County shall continue to enforce the baseline restrictions and mitigation efforts as directed through various state directives.
- Referencing our continued downward trajectory and review of the continuing successful OSHA compliance data reinforces the fact that Nye County has exceeded many of the existing statewide restrictions and requirements by policing the use of masks, physical distancing, and reduced facility capacity. However, we shall further implement additional county modifications to address future "specific sources" of infection that we may encounter.
 - *Public/Private Partnership:* Prior to the re-closure, Nye County and Pahrump had been recognized as a leader in COVID-19 spread mitigation through OSHA and County conducted inspections of various community businesses.
 - Through a cooperative partnership with our business community, Nye County established a self-assessment and commit plan following predictive COVID-19 best practices. This partnership shall be accompanied by a public education outreach campaign spearheaded by our business leaders, our Public Information Officer, and enforcement agencies.
 - *Reporting requirements:* Although recent OSHA evaluations have identified high compliance within Nye County and Pahrump, we will not rest on our laurels and will adopt a self-reporting requirement that is reinforced through our enhanced enforcement effort that is outlined within. This shall require public and private groups to report known and confirmed cases that have originated in their business to Nye County Department of Emergency Management. Undisclosed cases or intentional disregard of compliance would automatically result in closure of the business until remediation or compliance could be ensured. We believe that this requirement best positions Nye County to avoid COVID-19 spikes due to non-compliance of existing restrictions.

Protection of Vulnerable Populations:

- Nye County continues to monitor and support the Nye County Sheriff's Office Jail, long-term, skilled nursing and assisted living facilities, and other vulnerable populations located throughout the County. This is completed by providing testing kits, PPE, and other associated prevention resource materials.

Enforcement:

County Level Information (Nye County has no incorporated cities within its boundaries so only county data is available)

- Overview of county agencies involved in enforcement - Nye County continues to embrace a joint communication and enforcement model which includes the Nye County Sheriff's Office, Nye

County Emergency Services, Nye County Code Compliance, the Nye County District Attorney's Office, Nye County Public Information Office, Nye County Workplace Safety & Training Officer, and Nevada OSHA.

- Overview of the number of observations conducted by county enforcement officials – Nye County refers most alleged violations and concerns to Nevada State OSHA. Nye County established a dedicated COVID Hotline (775-751-4333) for residents to report their concerns. Since August 14, 2020, we have received approximately 12 calls which have all been referred to Nevada State OSHA. Businesses which have been reported include bars, fitness centers, RV parks, grocery stores, firearms facilities and department stores. As of the most recent DIR update received this morning, Nye County has not been mentioned as a non-compliant county, nor have any Nye County businesses received OSHA citations since August 14, 2020.

In addition to referring cases to OSHA, County officials also respond to calls themselves. Nye County has responded to or observed approximately 15 businesses. These include bars, restaurants, department stores, grocery stores, schools, and horse racing facilities. County officials have also intervened or investigated advertised events. Nye County officials have also responded to alleged violations within county government by working directly with Nevada State OSHA to address allegations that public officials and employees were not complying with the Governor's Directives.

- Overview of compliance rates during county observations – Of the cases observed by or reported to Nye County officials, we have seen an approximately 90% compliance rate. Most businesses in Nye County are willing to comply with the Governor's Directives to avoid being closed, fined, or contributing to the pandemic. One notable exception was a political event held at a private business last week. The United States Secret Service reported that approximately 483 individuals attended the event. Masks were distributed to all participants but not all were observed actually wearing them. Hand sanitizer was readily available. Nye County had little advance knowledge of this event but after receiving notice, the County contacted Nevada State OSHA as it has with all cases of alleged or actual non-compliance. OSHA investigators were on-site prior to the event and spoke with counsel for the event organizers and did not issue citations or assess fines as of the DIR compliance update this morning.
- Overview of the number of violations and enforcement actions taken by county officials – Because compliance rates have been so high, the County has had to take very few enforcement actions. In all instances, a simple warning was sufficient to rectify any non-compliance. No fines have been issued, no businesses have been closed, nor has it been necessary to do either.

Since the date of our last report three weeks ago, Nye County has had 25 new positive COVID-19 cases with one new death.

Working with the State Epidemiologist office, Nye County has placed over 415 patients to recovered status with additional patients under review.

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Conclusion:

Nye County continues to make great strides in reducing the COVID-19 impact on our communities. Through testing and contact tracing, we continue to identify and understand community-specific risks and exposures. This in-turn allows us to take the necessary steps to minimize the influence and spread of COVID.

Submitted by:
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