



Statement on the 2009 Legislative Session

What is the Nevada Public Health Association?

The Nevada Public Health Association (NPHA) is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and represents a wide range of public health professional disciplines and organizations, including the Nevada State Health Division, local health departments, universities, nonprofit agencies, local businesses, and individual public health professionals.

Why is NPHA concerned about the 2009 session?

Health is the cornerstone of a vibrant and flourishing community. It is estimated that 95% of all major health problems can be prevented through public health interventions such as smoking cessation, chronic disease management, and regular health screenings. Research shows that an investment of only \$10 per person per year in prevention programs in Nevada could yield a net savings of \$17.9 million in the first 1 to 2 years alone; and, ultimately, yielding a return of nearly \$5 for every \$1 invested.

In the two Special Sessions, Nevada's public health infrastructure was devastated by budget cuts. If this trend continues, the improvements that Nevada has made in terms of prevention behaviors will be lost. Nevada is already at the bottom of most health status lists, and this will worsen if actions are not taken now.

What are NPHA's priorities for the Session?

As difficult funding decisions are made this session, NPHA urges your consideration for the following policy positions. All are cost-neutral.

- **Preserve funding *already allocated* to tobacco prevention and control programs.** Since these programs began, Nevada's smoking rate has dropped by 10%.
- **Increase the state cigarette excise tax.** This is a proven strategy for further reducing smoking rates and medical costs. It also generates new revenue for programs and for state and local governments.
- **Reauthorize the collection of Body Mass Index data for school children.** This allows the public health community to continue to monitor and respond to childhood obesity trends.
- **Increase physical education for school children.** Increasing opportunities for children to be physically active can help them maintain a healthy weight now and later in life.
- **Increase access to health care.** Requiring third-party payers to provide additional coverage for health care services, such as HIV testing, and allowing for presumptive eligibility for Medicaid are just two examples of how law-makers can ensure that all Nevadans have access to the health care they need.

Who can provide additional information on public health issues?

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For more information about NPHA, please visit www.nphaonline.org.