



AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Roberta Keeley, EPREP Program Manager
Phone: 318-8452

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Ricin Poisoning in Las Vegas, NV

Las Vegas, NV- In a local area hospital a man is in critical condition from Ricin poisoning, vials found in his hotel room confirm the rare poison. The Las Vegas Police Department is not considering this an act of terrorism but continue to follow-up on leads as they develop. While this remains an isolated case; would you be prepared if this was a public health emergency? Area Health Education Center of Southern Nevada's (AHEC) Emergency Preparedness and Response Program (EPREP) offers 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' courses live and online, throughout the year. These courses continue to offer the latest healthcare information on recognizing symptoms, approved protocol for treating highly infectious and fatal biological weapons, but also how to work with county, state and Federal agencies to ensure timely and effective evacuation plans. Over the past six years, AHEC's Emergency Preparedness and Response Education Program has trained more than 8,100 healthcare professionals statewide to recognize and respond to acts of biological terrorism and other public health threats and emergencies.

Roberta Keeley, EPREP Program Manager states, 'No one ever thinks this type of incident could happen, especially in your own city, however this story proves that the training we offer is necessary and prudent for all healthcare providers, firefighters, police, EMT's and all first responders.' The next live program is scheduled for March 29th; however, any healthcare professional may receive Continuing Education credits via the online courses at www.snahec.org. AHEC is also sponsoring the 2nd Western Regional Preparedness Conference, at the Renaissance Hotel, July 15-18, 2008. Topics to include Preparedness Basics, Business Planning and Continuity, Mental Healthcare, Law Enforcement and Overall Patient Care in a disaster. For more information on this conference or other courses, please visit, www.snahec.org for more information.

In October 2005, Area Health Education Center of Southern Nevada received a grant award from the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response (ASPR) to fund the Nevada bioterrorism Continuing Education Project. The three-year grant fund's a comprehensive, four-part continuing education and training program to strengthen and enhance bioterrorism preparedness for community health care professionals across the state. The program provides Nevada's health care workforce with the ability to recognize indications of a terrorist attack; meet the acute needs of patients, including pediatric and other vulnerable populations, in a safe and appropriate

www.snahec.org

(702) 318-8452 (Fax) 702-318-8463
1094 E. Sahara Las Vegas, NV 89104



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manner; participate in a coordinated, multi-disciplinary response to mass casualty events and other public health emergencies; and rapidly and effectively alert Nevada's public health system of an event at the community, state, and national level.

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1094 E. Sahara Las Vegas, NV 89104