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CONTACT: Meghin Delaney

Communications Director

Press@gov.nv.gov

Governor Sisolak Releases Prepared Remarks, Guidance for Phase 2 Reopening, Plans Press Call

Carson City, NV — Today, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak announced that Nevada is ready to move into Phase 2 of the state's Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery reopening plan on Friday, May 29.

"Nevadans have done an incredible job helping to flatten the curve and I want to again thank you for understanding the severity of this health care crisis and for taking the necessary precautionary measures, like making a face covering a part of everyday wear," **Gov. Sisolak said.** "Our collective actions have helped bring us to where we are today, ready to begin Phase 2 of reopening."

Due to technical difficulties, the Governor has decided to release his prepared remarks and guidance for Phase 2. A Phase 2 Directive and more industry specific guidance will be released tomorrow and will be available on the Nevada Health Response website.

The Governor will hold a press call at 8:30 p.m. this evening. Media interested in joining the call can email press@gov.nv.gov for access to the call-in information.

A copy of the Governor's prepared remarks are below:

Good evening.

I am sorry that I could not be providing these remarks in a traditional press conference. My Office and I learned today that I was potentially exposed to COVID-19 last week.

Last week I was at a location where an employee, who was not there on the day I was, subsequently tested positive for COVID-19.

*Out of an abundance **of caution**, I will be quarantining in the Nevada Governor's Mansion in Carson City until I receive results of a COVID-19 test I took today. I will let you know as soon as I get the results.*

I want to be clear: I feel fine and I am not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. I hope Nevadans can use this as a learning lesson, if you have been exposed, or if you know someone who has been exposed, go get a test, even if you're asymptomatic. It's that easy.

Again, the person who tested positive was not in the location the same day I was there.

I am thankful for all the work Nevada has done to make sure we have sufficient testing capacity. I have always been transparent and honest with Nevadans and this is no change.

I could not hold an in-person press conference to provide Nevadans this update knowing what I know now about this potential exposure.

But I do know Nevadans are eager to hear about our Phase 2 reopening updates.

*First, we are on track to begin Phase 2 reopening on **Friday, May 29**. To be clear, businesses can take more time to prepare and get ready to reopen if they want.*

Here's how I will walk through information today. First, I want to give Nevadans an update on our data and on our continued efforts to help mitigate the spread of this virus.

Next, I will talk about the Phase 2 statewide standards. These are standards that individuals and businesses must abide by across the state in Phase 2.

Then, I will talk about what will stay the same in Phase 2, including businesses and services that must remain closed in Phase 2.

After that, I will talk about what new businesses and services may open – under strict guidelines.

Finally, I will talk about today's Gaming Control Board meeting and what that means for reopening gaming operations in Nevada.

As I have discussed before, our Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery emphasizes empowering our local communities. And I again want to thank members of the Local Empowerment Advisory Panel.

These folks have been working around the clock with their local health authorities, regulators and industry experts to provide guidance and recommendations for Nevada's phased reopening.

So far, during Phase 1, we continue to see a consistent and sustainable downward trajectory of percentage of positive COVID-19 cases and a decrease in the trend of COVID-19 hospitalizations.

*Our cumulative test positivity rate – which is the number of people testing positive against the total number of tests – **has declined to 6.5 percent.** We have been in a downward trend for 31 days - a full month.*

*When it comes to confirmed COVID hospitalizations, we are in a **35-day downward trend.** According to the Nevada Hospital Association, intensive care and ventilator use remained flat over this past long weekend, and hospitals continue to have enough capacity to manage a surge at this time.*

The Hospital Association asked me to remind Nevadans that it is safe for you to visit your doctor or your hospital. Make an appointment today or seek urgent care when you are sick or injured. Nevada's health care providers have

always treated people who are sick - and ensured the wellness of those who are not - in safe, appropriate care settings.

Third, we continue to increase our testing and lab capacity in the state to administer and process tests.

*On most days, we are surpassing our goal of 4,000 tests a day and just yesterday, labs in the state reported more than **9,325 test results**.*

Our public labs in Nevada have increased their ability to analyze samples exponentially over the last two months, and that will continue to increase.

As we enter into Phase 2, community-based testing will be essential to our efforts to fully reopen and sustain the reopening.

Fourth, our public health agencies continue to expand our ability to do contact tracing when we have positive cases so we can track down possible clusters, isolate people and minimize future outbreaks.

We are finalizing action plans for a more robust statewide contact tracing system that will expand our ability to trace this virus in a more coordinated and cohesive way. Our State COVID-19 Response Director, Caleb Cage, has been working with Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, the Division of Emergency Management, the Nevada State Public Health Lab, and our local government partners, and more details on the statewide testing and contact tracing plans will be provided later this week.

Finally, we must make sure we have a sustained ability to protect our vulnerable populations and minimize outbreaks in special settings.

Nevada's Department of Health and Human Services has been steadfast in this goal, working with communities across the State to help minimize outbreak and provide assistance where needed.

While the national average of COVID-19 related deaths in these facilities is 42%, Nevada's average is 23.9%.

And per my direction, DHHS is also working with the Nevada Department of Corrections on an effort to test all inmates and facility staff. Together, they are creating testing plans for each facility and I continue to express that this is a priority.

Nevadans have done an incredible job helping to flatten the curve, and I want to again thank you for understanding the severity of this health care crisis and for taking the necessary precautionary measures, like making a face covering a part of everyday wear.

It's because of your response that I am able to relax some of the restrictions as we enter Phase 2.

During Phase 2, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of continuing to wear face coverings in public and maintaining at least six feet of social distancing when you are out in public and around people from other households.

*In Phase 2, we can increase public and private gatherings from no more than 10 people to **no more than 50 people**, while continuing to follow social distancing.*

Nevada's vulnerable populations should continue to shelter in place.

In Phase 2, employees will continue to be required to wear a face covering. All businesses who are operating in Phase 2 must also abide by measures set forth by OSHA and other regulatory authorities.

There are some businesses that will remain closed in Phase 2. Similar to Phase 1, Phase 2 will last 2-3 weeks as we monitor the data and evaluate trends and progress.

Businesses that remain closed in Phase 2 include:

- Adult entertainment establishments*
- Brothels*
- Nightclubs and day clubs*

- *Live sporting event venues and live performance venues **WITH** spectators...I'll be discussing closed, non-spectator events in a little bit.*

All businesses opened in Phase 1 must maintain all the same restrictions and guidelines as we continue to evaluate the impact and slowly lift restrictions on other activities.

During Phase 2, additional businesses and entities will be able to open, under strict guidelines. More specific guidance will be issued by my office and the Local Empowerment Advisory Panel (LEAP) - similar to the guidance that was issued in Phase 1 - but I wanted to go over the topline of this new directive, which will be issued and signed tomorrow.

In Phase 2, state offices may begin to resume some services to the public where necessary, although online services are still available and encouraged. My office is finalizing plans with our agency directors on public offices to reopen initially and will be making those announcements on a rolling basis.

Gyms, fitness facilities and other studios may reopen in Phase 2.

If a smaller gym or studio can only accommodate 10 or less people, they may only do so if they can adhere to the social distancing requirements and keep 6 feet of distance between all individuals.

Larger gyms are capped at 50% of occupancy per fire code and must also adhere to the strict social distancing requirements. Additionally, equipment must be regulated to ensure six feet of social distancing.

Group fitness classes will be limited to allow for 6 feet of social distancing between participants.

Locker rooms shall be closed except for restrooms

Facilities must close and prohibit use of showers, steam rooms, saunas, portable saunas, vapor baths, salt therapy rooms, hot tubs, and any other communal facilities

Strict sanitization protocols must be followed for the protection of employees and patrons.

*All of the same restrictions on **restaurants and food establishments** are continued in Phase 2, but bar areas in restaurants may reopen, and bars and taverns that DO NOT serve food may reopen under the same restrictions – 50% maximum capacity and strict social distancing. Patrons will NOT be allowed to walk up and order at the bars, but they may sit and be served at a bar top if appropriately distanced from one another – 6 feet apart. No congregating.*

*Salons and/or other businesses that provide **aesthetic or other skin services** may open under strict protocols and social distancing guidelines as recommended by LEAP and the Cosmetology Board.*

These include facials, hair removal, tanning, eyelash services, eyebrow threading, salt therapy, estheticians. and other services.

They may open under similar guidelines that hair and nail salons are operating, such as having a partition or wall between each work station, and if there's not a partition, ensuring the work stations are arranged to ensure 6 feet of separation.

It will be appointment only, and estheticians, technicians, and other employees must wear face coverings. Customers or clients should wear face coverings to the extent practicable.

***Day and overnight spas** may reopen to offer these services but may NOT open steam rooms, saunas, hot tubs or other communal facilities.*

***Massage services** may also reopen under similar conditions, including by appointment only. Face coverings must be worn at all times by employees, including the masseuse*

***Body art and piercing establishments** may reopen in Phase 2, with strict guidelines and by appointment only. During Phase 2, no body art or piercings*

may be done around the nose or mouth so that face coverings can be worn at all times.

Aquatic facilities and swimming pools may reopen. During Phase 2, locker rooms will not be allowed to reopen and these facilities will be limited to 50 percent of capacity. Face coverings should NOT be worn in the water.

Water parks will also be able to reopen, at 50 percent capacity with strict social distancing requirements.

Museums, art galleries, zoos and aquariums may reopen in Phase 2, at no more than 50 percent of capacity and must maintain at least six feet of social distancing. Interactive and hands-on exhibits must remain closed during this phase.

Indoor venues, like **movie theaters, bowling alleys and indoor malls** may reopen, again with occupancy restrictions and they must allow for six feet of social distancing. Indoor malls must prohibit areas where people congregate, including restricting seating or benches in hallways or open areas. Each individual retail store within an indoor mall will be subject to the same 50% capacity mandate and social distancing requirements. Food courts must adhere to the same restrictions as restaurants.

There will be similar restrictions for outdoor venues like **mini golf and amusement parks**.

In Phase 2, events with live performances and live performers will not be allowed WITH spectators. However, certain events will be allowed under specific restrictions for the purpose of broadcasting or live streaming - but they will NOT include a live audience or any spectators.

This may include sporting events, concerts, theater performances, or other entertainment type events. There will be also be protocols for other spectator less events that won't be filmed or broadcasted.

To hold a closed or spectator-less event, an Event Operator shall submit an Operation Plan to the appropriate state authority with jurisdiction over the

event. For example, the Gaming Control Board will approve these events on gaming properties, and the Nevada Athletic Commission will approve these events for any athletic competitions that it regulates. For those that don't fall within the jurisdiction of the Nevada Athletic Commission or the Gaming Control Board, they will be approved by the Nevada Department of Business & Industry.

Finally, we anticipate that **youth sports and recreation** will be able to open at some point in Phase 2. I know youth sports are important. We've asked for recommendations, from local youth sports associations, the LEAP and national organizations. There are a lot of considerations at play here and for our youth, we want to make sure we have a strong, safe plan in place.

We're working with the local districts and youth sports districts in the state to announce plans in Phase 2.

Again, specific industry guidance for all these industries is being finalized with my Office and the Local Empowerment Advisory Panel and will be posted online and distributed this week, but I wanted to be able to make this announcement today to allow our Nevada businesses to begin making preparations.

For so many Nevadans, restricting faith-based gatherings has been especially difficult.

Across the country we have seen houses of worship become hotspots for COVID-19 transmission. Our medical experts advise that bringing together people from different households in a confined space for extended periods of time greatly increases the likelihood of spreading COVID-19.

For these reasons, I strongly urge places of worship continue to provide online or virtual services as much as possible to protect those they serve, especially those who are among our vulnerable populations.

That said, in Phase 2, places of worship may reopen their doors for gatherings with a maximum of 50 people attending a service at a time and strict social

distancing of at least six feet. This aligns with our new guidance on all public and private gatherings.

I am confident faith leaders will follow the guidance and restrictions necessary to protect the health and welfare of their communities.

Now I want to talk about gaming. Last week, I set a target reopening date of Thursday, June 4, for our gaming industry. Based on the meeting today and the positive trends in our data, I have informed the Chair of the Gaming Control Board that I feel confident in the June 4th target date.

I want to thank Chairwoman Sandra Douglass Morgan and the Gaming Control Board for holding its informational workshop this morning, during which the Board received testimony from the state's COVID-19 Response Director, public health experts, and leaders of our emergency response departments.

The Board was briefed on how these various entities have worked with the gaming industry to ensure that there is a comprehensive plan in place to respond to and mitigate the effects of positive cases of COVID-19 that present themselves in the State's resort corridors.

It is critical to put the health and safety of employees, residents and visitors first through proactive measures, coupled with the Health and Safety Policies issued by the Gaming Control Board. This is what will help ensure that Nevada can safely reopen its gaming industry on June 4.

I know the Gaming Control Board remains resolute in ensuring that gaming operations in this State do not compromise the health and safety of Nevadans, our employees and our visitors.

The Board will issue an industry notice tomorrow setting forth requirements for the resumption of gaming operations in the State of Nevada.

As always, I encourage Nevadans to stay vigilant and protect themselves against this virus. Our goal is to prevent a surge in cases that our health care

system cannot handle. We cannot do this without each of you accepting the personal responsibility to follow the social distancing guidelines in professional and personal decisions.

We know from the medical experts, until there is cure or vaccine, social distancing is the most powerful response we have to slow the spread of COVID-19. It's very simple - when you are out in public, wear a mask or face covering, practice social distancing, and wash your hands.

Our actions now will determine what actions we can take in the future. It's our personal responsibility to stay safe for ourselves, and others, and to work together through this process.

So, please, put on your face covering when you leave your house. Help protect your fellow Nevadans. Wear your face covering like a badge of honor.

Thank you!