

COMMUNITY & GOVERNANCE

What is a healthcare district?
The pursuit of health
and wellness.



NO ONE KNOWS THE NEEDS OF A COMMUNITY BETTER
THAN THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE.

LOCAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Healthcare districts are the most responsive, local form of government, directly accountable to the communities they serve.

They are operated and controlled by local voters who best understand their community's healthcare needs.

OUR HISTORY

In 1962, Basin residents voted to create Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District. By 1975 the healthcare district built and operated Hi-Desert Medical Center. In 2015, due to an economic crisis, the medical center operations were sold to Tenet Healthcare. The District changed its name to Morongo Basin Healthcare District (MBHD) and now operates two federally qualified health centers located in 29 Palms and Yucca Valley.

VOTER CONTROL

Voters elect the public board that oversees the spending of their local tax dollars in pursuit of improved community health. The close connection between voters and the healthcare district ensures openness and transparency. The monies from property taxes are directed back into the community through healthcare services and programs as directed by the elected Board of Directors.

As a government agency, MBHD submits an annual financial report to the California State Controller. MBHD complies with all state laws governing public records, record keeping, elections and public access to documents.

DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY

Healthcare districts have the power to do any and all things that are necessary for, and to the advantage of, any type of health promoting service or healthcare facility. They are responsible to improve access to healthcare services for the local communities they serve.

BENEFITS OF LIVING IN A HEALTHCARE DISTRICT

The following are representative of how MBHD strives to fulfill its mission of "Improving the health and wellness of the communities we serve."

- **CONVENIENT ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES:** Living in a healthcare district provides access to medical professionals and services close to home without traveling down-the-hill for primary care. Morongo Basin Community Health Centers in 29 Palms and Yucca Valley are owned and operated by MBHD and offer primary care physicians and nurse practitioners for adults and children, dentists, chiropractic care, onsite lab services,



and behavioral health services to its patients as a comprehensive, preventive care program.

In making healthcare accessible, it also provides

free transportation to medical and dental appointments for its patients.

- **AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE:** The healthcare district receives federal funding to provide health services to the uninsured and underserved populations within its geographic boundaries. A discounted fee is offered to qualifying patients based on household size and income. The financial services department works with patients who may need a comfortable payment plan. The health centers accept IEHP, Medi-Cal, Medicare and most private insurances.
- **COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION:** The District promotes health literacy by hosting free community lectures on health-related topics at senior centers in Yucca Valley, 29 Palms and Joshua Tree.



The District sponsors two annual health fairs in the Basin to bring local and regional resources for community members and to provide health information and screenings.

The District secured grant monies to educate local medical professionals and the community about HIV. The campaign emphasized the importance of testing for the virus and issued free at-home test kits.

- **COLLABORATION FOR BETTER OUTCOMES:** Over its many years, MBHD has partnered with agencies and organizations to benefit Basin residents. Its current strategic plan calls for engaging local, regional, state and even federal entities to bring resources and solutions to benefit Morongo Basin residents.

MBHD is active at the county and state levels, serving on committees and boards to advocate for healthcare in the Basin. Locally, MBHD partners with local agencies such as the Town of Yucca Valley, City of 29 Palms, and Morongo Unified School District to bring health related resources (health fairs, Flying Doctors and other community events).

MBHD pursues federal, state and county grant monies in support of health services, including partnering with ReachOut, Kaiser and MBTA for transportation to medical and dental appointments.

- **ECONOMIC IMPACT:** Healthcare districts stimulate the local economy, not only through creating employment, but also career pathways that support families and stimulates economic activity.

MBHD has 100 employees covering a wide variety of skills, from health professionals to the many support departments for the delivery of patient care. The District actively recruits medical and dental professionals to the Basin in support of health services.

It also collaborates with Morongo Unified School District, Copper Mountain College and Community Health Association Southern Inland Empire to develop programs and opportunities for students pursuing a career in medicine, such as preparing to work as a medical assistant.

MORONGO BASIN HEALTHCARE DISTRICT

Improving the health and wellness of the communities we serve.

District Offices: 6530 La Contenta Road #100 | Yucca Valley CA 92284 | 760.820.9229 | MorongoBasinHealth.org

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM: Budget Cuts (EDITED to comply w/META rules)
July 2025

We understand that healthcare changes at state and federal levels may raise concerns. At Morongo Basin Healthcare District, we remain committed to our mission, “To improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.”

Our team is actively reviewing our model of care to ensure that we meet the needs of our patients – no matter the challenge. The Morongo Basin Community Health Centers, a service provided by the healthcare district, will continue providing accessible, quality care to our Basin communities.

As always, our dedicated staff is here for you, focused on helping you manage your health for the best possible outcome.

Cindy Schmall, CEO
Morongo Basin Healthcare District



This health section is brought to you
by Morongo Basin Healthcare District

California Federally Qualified **COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS** Are Under Threat

A Dangerous Statewide Ballot Measure Threatens Care for Millions of Patients Who Rely on Community Health Centers for Healthcare



A ballot initiative, sponsored by Service Employees International Union (SEIU), would impose arbitrary and extreme restrictions on how federally qualified health centers spend money on patient care and community services. The initiative would divert billions of dollars from patient care into new state bureaucracy, forcing many health centers to significantly cut back on patient services and potentially close their doors, leaving millions of vulnerable Californians without essential care. Further, the ballot measure seeks to criminalize volunteer patient board members and authorize costly shake-down lawsuits against community health centers. This is not about policy reform but about political bullying.

SEIU is one of the largest and fastest-growing labor unions in North America and is affiliated with AFL-CIO, Canadian Labor Congress, Public Services International, and UNI Global Union. Since 2022, community health centers have been the focus of a resource intensive political campaign by

SEIU in retaliation for health centers refusing to unionize. It is a power play by labor union executives who are weaponizing the ballot measure to force their demands on community health centers.

Required 90% Spend Ratio:

Health centers will be required to spend 90% of total revenue on direct patient care. If less than 90% of total revenue is reported, a penalty equal to the entire shortfall will be paid to the state. Example: if the health center spends only 70% of revenue on direct patient care, the entire 20% balance must be paid to the state.

While 90% of revenue for direct patient care seems reasonable, it excludes ALL operational necessities such as the patient medical record system and staff to maintain it, drivers for patient transportation services, front office staff, building leases, janitorial and facilities maintenance staff, utilities

(phone, office supplies, printing), human resources staff, employee benefits such as health insurance, IT systems/security and staff, billing staff, accountants, legal and auditing expenses, property and equipment insurance, general liability insurance, and more.

The exclusion of basic operational necessities, some required by healthcare law, ensures non-compliance by most health centers and that penalties will be imposed, diverting billions of dollars from patient care. This will force many health centers to operate in the red and significantly cut back on patient services with devastating loss of access to care for millions of vulnerable patients.

Criminal Liability for Health Center Officers, Agents & Patient Board Members:

Health Center CEOs, executives, agents, and volunteer patient

MorongoBasinHealth.org



board members could face criminal prosecution and imprisonment for up to one year if found to have knowingly misreported clinic revenue or expenses, even if through a related entity or foundation.

Unlike current law, this initiative allows any patient to sue a health center for falling below the 90% mandate or failing to submit required financial reports, even if intent was good. It strips away the business judgment rule and usual legal protection for health center patient-led boards acting in good faith.

Health centers are already heavily regulated by federal and state governments, with strict reporting requirements and audits of how resources are spent on patient care. Resources are focused on patient care and community benefits, not profits or shareholders. A majority of the health center governing board must be patients of that facility, ensuring decisions reflect patient and community needs.

Yet, the imposed regulations and penalties imposed by this ballot measure would put 90% of California community health centers at risk for failing to meet the new mandate. Nearly all California community health centers would be forced

to operate with a negative operating income after penalties. Up to 48% (97 facilities) would be forced to close statewide. Thousands of healthcare jobs would be lost, and millions of patients would be left without local care.

If health centers shut down, many patients will lose access to care, skip preventive services, and end up in emergency rooms with more costly, difficult-to-treat conditions. By forcing patients into more costly forms of care, this ballot measure will increase overall healthcare costs for consumers, the state and taxpayers by billions of dollars each year.



If passed, this mandate would become law and be locked-in, meaning the Legislature cannot amend it unless the proposed changes "further its purposes." Only a new statewide ballot measure would be able to fix the damage to patients, community health centers and the healthcare safety net.

Morongo Basin Community Health Center will be subject to this political bullying if the ballot measure passes on the 2026 state ballot. The health center provides medical, behavioral health and dental care to over 8,800 local residents at its facilities in 29 Palms and Yucca Valley.

Morongo Basin Healthcare District has joined with other organizations to educate Californians and reject the attack on community health centers. Please join us in voting against this ballot measure.

Visit ProtectPatientsCA.com to learn more.

KEY CHANGES TO SNAP / CALFRESH BENEFITS

Benefit program updated information --

EXPANDED WORK REQUIREMENTS: Able-bodied adults, ages 18-65 are required to work, volunteer, be enrolled in school or training program for a minimum of 80-hours per month. Adults with dependent children under age 14 are exempt from this requirement.

RECERTIFICATION FOR BENEFITS: To continue SNAP benefits, enrollees will be required to report compliance annually, though same may be directed to report monthly. Any change in status must be reported within 10-days of change (such as location / address, income, benefits, or household size), and then must recertify within 30-days.

Learn more at BenefitsCal.com

START YOUR NEW YEAR WITH AN ANNUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Make an annual health assessment a New Year's resolution. A preventive check-up keeps minor health issues from becoming major problems. Without screenings and professional assessment, signs of a growing health problem may go undetected and increase your health risk. The earlier you identify a problem, the better your chances of getting treatment. What's more, the healthier you are, the better prepared you will be to battle any future health crisis that may come your way. Preventive services are 100% covered by most medical plans when you visit an in-network health provider. Be proactive for your health and peace of mind... schedule that check-up!

Need a medical provider? Morongo Basin Community Health Center has conveniently located offices in Yucca Valley and 29 Palms. Call us for that check-up at **760-365-9305**.



*This health section is brought to you by
Morongo Basin Healthcare District*

Partnering with our community to

IMPROVE HEALTH & WELLNESS

Reducing the risk of opioid overdose



Morongo Basin Healthcare District is partnering with community members to help lower the risk of opioid overdose and HIV exposure. By providing tools to help individuals protect themselves and others, we seek to improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is now commonly found in the illicit drug supply, often without the user's knowledge. It's crucial to understand that even a tiny amount of fentanyl, the size of a grain of sand, can be deadly.

Fentanyl test strips are small, affordable strips of paper that can detect fentanyl in various drug forms like pills, powders, and injectables. They work by detecting the presence of fentanyl and its other forms in a diluted sample of the drug. They do not, however, measure the quantity or potency of the fentanyl present in the sample. The test strips are not 100% accurate. Even with a negative result, drugs may still contain fentanyl in its other powerful forms.

Opioid overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S. During an

overdose emergency, Naloxone (Narcan) nasal spray can temporarily reverse the effects by restoring breathing while waiting for emergency personnel to arrive.

Morongo Basin Healthcare District was awarded a federal grant to provide education and resources to our communities to reduce drug overdose occurrences and exposure to HIV. The healthcare District purchased HIV self-test kits, fentanyl test strips and Narcan nasal spray as part of its harm reduction campaign. These tools are available from Morongo Basin Healthcare District at no cost. Our team will distribute these free kits at community events. Or, call our confidential voicemail line at 760-820-9229 extension 1920 to request a free Harm Reduction Kit.

JOIN US FOR A FAMILY
DAY OF FUN AND HEALTH

SATURDAY
October 11
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

FREEDOM CENTER
29 PALMS

**COMMUNITY HEALTH
& RESOURCE FAIR**

GET RESOURCES TO MANAGE YOUR HEALTH



MorongoBasinHealth.org

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

and its projected impact

On July 4, 2025, President Trump signed into law the One Big, Beautiful Bill Act (also known as HR-1). This new legislation will have sweeping impacts across Medicaid, and other government programs. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates the bill's health provisions will result in 11.8 million people losing health coverage by 2034.

WORK REQUIREMENT: By December 31, 2026, states must implement community engagement (work) requirements for certain Medicaid enrollees. Adults 19-64 years of age (with some exceptions) must work at least 80 hours per month and document their compliance every six months to retain benefits.

COVERAGE GAP: Medicaid, which had been limited to seniors, low-income parents, pregnant women and individuals with disabilities, was expanded in 2021 by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to include adults, aged 19-64 with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level. The federal government subsidized 90% of the expansion cost. The ACA will expire at the end of 2025. Individuals most affected by this expiration and the new legislative changes are those with income at 138% of the federal poverty level. It is anticipated that individuals without health insurance benefits will default to the local emergency room for medical care.

REDETERMINATION: The new legislation requires states to redetermine, or requalify, individual eligibility every six months, rather than once a year for individuals enrolled in the Medicaid Expansion program. It is projected that more frequent eligibility confirmation will force individuals off Medicaid coverage for non-compliance with documentation deadlines.

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER TAX: Historically, large entities, such as private hospitals, are required to pay a state tax to subsidize rural hospitals who serve as a safety net to provide healthcare to uninsured and underserved rural populations. The collected funds were matched by the federal government and distributed to rural hospitals. The new bill eliminates matching federal monies for the Provider Tax Program, a significant cut in financial support, and limits the state provider tax not to exceed 6%. Additionally, in 2032 the provider tax will be reduced to 3.5%, further reducing the financial support of rural hospitals.

A more detailed summary of this legislation is available at MorongoBasinHealth.org. A QR-code is provided here for your convenience to view the expanded summary.



EARLY DETECTION BETTER HEALTH

Know Your HIV Status is part of the healthcare district's harm reduction campaign. Knowing your status empowers you to make informed choices about your sexual health and take steps to prevent HIV transmission to partners. Early diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve long-term health, reducing the risk of developing AIDS and related illnesses.

The home HIV test kit offers a convenient and private way to know your status. Results are typically available within 20 minutes. The kits are easy to use, simple, and non-invasive, requiring an oral swab.



The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone, ages 13 and older, get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine healthcare. More frequent testing is recommended for individuals engaging in high-risk behavior.

The home HIV self-test kit is included in the healthcare district's free Harm Reduction Kit distributed at community events, or request a kit by calling the confidential voicemail line at 760-820-9229 extension 1920.

Here's Looking at You, Kid

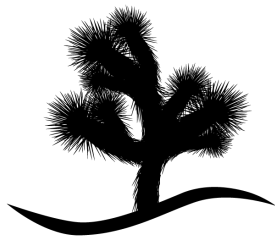
A Tip for Taking Care of Your Vision

As life becomes more digital, staring at a screen for prolonged periods can cause eye strain. Schedule regular eye exams and take precautions to protect your eyes. A recent survey found that the average American spends at least seven hours a day using electronic devices. Constant unrelieved use can cause eye strain and dry eyes, as well as disturb sleep patterns. Practice the 20-20-20 rule: after 20 minutes of staring at a screen, look away toward an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds.



Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is now commonly found in the illicit drug supply, often without the user's knowledge. It's crucial to understand that even a tiny amount of fentanyl can be deadly. Fentanyl test strips (FTS) offer a way to check for the presence of fentanyl in drugs, empowering users to make informed decisions and potentially prevent fatal overdoses.

Morongo Basin Healthcare District is partnering with you to help lower the risks of opioid overdose or HIV exposure. We have provided this information as a tool to help you protect yourself and others, and to implement strategies for your best health.



MORONGO BASIN
HEALTHCARE DISTRICT

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*Improving the health and wellness
of the communities we serve.*

WHAT ARE FENTANYL TEST STRIPS?

Fentanyl test strips (FTS) are small, affordable strips of paper that can detect fentanyl in various drug forms like pills, powders, and injectables. They work by detecting the presence of fentanyl and its other forms, in a diluted sample of the drug. They do not, however, measure the quantity or potency of the fentanyl present in the sample.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR FENTANYL TEST STRIPS

- **FTS are not 100% accurate.** Even with a negative result, drugs may still contain fentanyl and its other forms, including highly potent ones like carfentanil.
- Fentanyl may not be evenly distributed throughout a drug supply, so a negative test might miss a contaminated portion.
- Combining FTS with other harm reduction strategies is crucial to ensure safety.

- Always be prepared with naloxone (Narcan) and know how to use it to reverse an opioid overdose.
- Never use drugs alone. If using alone, use a supervised consumption site or have someone check on you.
- Start with a small amount (“Go slow and start low”) to assess the strength of the drug.
- Avoid mixing drugs, especially opioids with other substances like alcohol or benzodiazepines.
- Using FTS and practicing other harm reduction strategies, individuals can reduce the risk of overdose and potentially save lives.
- Please follow instructions in the enclosed kits as provided.

For additional Fentanyl test strips or Naloxone supplies call 760-820-9229 extension 1920

February 2026 Has Arrived And . . .

THERE'S STILL TIME To Choose Health in 2026

Whatever your age, choose a "new-you" habit for 2026!



Even though February has arrived, there's still time to choose health in 2026 and make those new year resolutions to break free of old habits and launch into a healthier you!

Studies indicate that the change in calendar year creates a mental reset, a fresh start effect that triggers our brains to respond to a new beginning. Statistics also show that 30 per cent of the population makes "new-you" resolutions but abandons them after 3.7 months.

Experts tell us there is value in writing down goals, thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving them. Even if you choose just one goal for change, write it down and track your progress.

Here are tips for making your "new-you" resolutions last longer than a few months.

- Choose one to two meaningful goals that fit into your current lifestyle without making drastic and disrupting changes.
- Start small and be specific in stating what you want to achieve. Instead of "get healthy," define the details, such as, "walk 20 minutes three times a week."
- Expect setbacks. Focus on being consistent, not perfect. When you mess up, get back on track the next day without mentally distress.
- Track your progress weekly with an app, journal or chart on the refrigerator. The goal is to establish a new habit. Make reasonable adjustments to your goals and expectations to achieve success.
- Celebrate consistency. Recognize your wins!

Healthy suggestions to help you choose a "new-you" goal:

- Take stretching breaks for every two hours of sitting.
- Drink more water each day. Hydration improves energy, skin health and digestion.
- Eat more whole foods (fruits, grains, proteins). Wean from processed foods. Cook at home more often which is healthier and cheaper than fast food fare.
- Reduce sugar intake by cutting back on soda, candy and sugary snacks, replacing it with healthier options.
- Turn off screens (phone, tablets, computers) 60 minutes before bed for improved sleep.
- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule with a set bedtime. Most adults need 7 to 9 hours sleep each night.
- Exercise three times a week, moving your body regularly such as walking, dancing, etc.

And, annual preventive health check ups catch problems early. Schedule a physical exam, dental cleaning and eye exam in 2026.

Success is more than choosing the right goal. It's choosing a goal that resonates with you and then building that new habit, one consistent step at a time.

Stay focused for the win in 2026!



MorongoBasinHealth.org

A LOCAL HEALTH RESOURCE FOR ACHIEVING YOUR 2026 GOALS

Morongo Basin Healthcare District is committed to improving the health and well-being of Basin residents and making healthcare accessible. Our programs and services are designed to make managing your health effective and convenient.

Access these services in 29 Palms or Yucca Valley by calling our scheduling team at **760-365-9305**.

Medicare, Medi-Cal, IEHP, cash payment and most private insurance are accepted. A sliding fee discount, based on household income and size, is available. The uninsured are welcome.

ADULT MEDICINE: Morongo Basin Community Health Center is committed to helping you manage your health and achieving the best possible outcome. With a focus on preventive healthcare, annual health check-ups are encouraged. Whatever your health needs are, our providers are ready to listen and care for you.

PEDIATRICS: Dr. Frascetti and Dr. Shih care for patients aged 0-18 at both the 29 Palms and Yucca Valley offices. They encourage well child visits to track growth and development milestones, and to address parent concerns. Our health center staff accommodate timely appointments for sick children. Through a collaborative partnership between parents, children and pediatricians, we focus on providing the best possible care for every child.

DENTAL: Morongo Basin Community Health Center provides dental care to adults and children with a staff of dedicated professionals. Available services include X-ray, exam, cleaning, fillings, extractions, selected root canals and crowns.

We welcome Medi-Cal, IEHP and all private dental insurance (PPO) patients, offering a ten percent discount for cash patients. Ask us how you can be seen by our dental professionals. An appointment is required to receive dental services. Call us at **760-820-4131**.

WELLNESS WHEELS: Free, non-emergency transportation to and from health-related appointments helps make healthcare accessible for Basin residents. The District's Wellness Wheels transportation program is by appointment. Call us to schedule your transportation for your next appointment: **760-366-5438**.

COVERED CALIFORNIA has declared a Special Enrollment Period for San Bernardino County. Because of the Governor's State of Emergency proclamation related to storm outcomes, the special enrollment period allows for new enrollment or making changes to an existing benefit plan. Sheree Fansler is a certified enrollment counsel who can assist you with navigating the Covered California program. Assistance is provided at no cost but does require an appointment. Don't wait. The special enrollment period ends February 22, 2026. Schedule your assistance by calling Sheree at **760-820-9229 extension 1546**.

For more information about services and programs, visit MorongoBasinHealth.org



HEART HEALTH & NUTRITION

FREE Lecture

February 9
Joshua Tree

February 18
Yucca Valley

February 19
29 Palms

Join us for a free lecture and learn about the connection between nutrition and heart health.

Get practical tips for choosing foods that support heart health and how to prepare them based on heart-friendly recipes. Learn how to shop with a budget conscious mind set. And, get tips for prepping meals to accommodate your busy lifestyle.

No registration is required to attend the lecture.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Staff on location from 10a-12p with resource information

Monday, February 9

Joshua Tree Senior Center
6171 Sunburst Avenue
Lecture begins at 11:15a

Wednesday, February 18

Yucca Valley Senior Center
57088 29 Palms Hwy
Lecture begins at 11:30a

Thursday, February 19

29 Palms Senior Center
6539 Adobe Road
Lecture begins at 10:15a