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SAY HELLO TO A BI-WEEKLY CALL-IN SHOW DESIGNED TO HELP AGING ADULTS WEATHER THE COVID-19 STORM

New, virtual community gatherings from 'The Hello Project' help older adults stay connected and informed during uncertain times.

RENO, Nev. (May 3, 2020) – When *The HELLO Project* received a BUILD Health Challenge grant back in November to address social isolation and loneliness amongst elderly adults in Reno, they had no idea how timely and relevant the program would be. Rising to the challenge, *The HELLO Project* has fast-tracked programs to engage and enrich the lives of older adults sheltering in place.

It Starts with Hello, *The Hello Project's* bi-weekly virtual community gathering place, takes place Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon, and people can attend by calling in or joining on their computer via Zoom ([See viewing information here](#)). Each show will feature a timely topic, factual information, a chance to chat with others in the community, and ends with some good news – The Daily Dandelion.

The first episodes of the virtual series featured Dr. Coard from Renown Health's Stacie Mathewson Behavioral Health and Addiction Institute. During these informative sessions, Dr. Coard discussed anxiety and helpful strategies to deal with the stress of this pandemic. *The HELLO Project* also produced a [four-page resource guide](#) to direct the community to resources for staying socially engaged during these challenging times.

"While we keep referring to this period of isolation as social distancing, it really should be thought of as physical distancing," said Kindle Craig, Director of Renown Health's Healthy Aging Institute. "Yes, to keep each other safe we need to keep our physical distance, but there is no reason we have to be socially isolated. In fact, now, more than ever, it's important that we foster our social connections. *It Starts with Hello* is about just that - we feature local experts talking about everything from mental health to nutritious cooking, and then we open it up and allow time for community conversation."

A partnership between Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities, Renown Health, and the Washoe County Health District, *The HELLO Project*, formerly known as CARE, was initially started due to the rate of suicide in Washoe County.

"Washoe County's suicide rate is twice the national average for people 65 and older, and four times the national average for people 85 and older¹," said Sharon Zadra, executive director of Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities. "We couldn't ignore the statistics. We had to try a new approach."



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For more information on *It Starts with Hello* and how to join the conversation, please visit www.hellostartsnow.org and enter your email address. From there, you will receive information on how to attend the virtual community gatherings.

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About Renown Health

Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region's largest private employers with a workforce of more than 7,000. It comprises three acute care hospitals, a rehabilitation hospital, the area's most comprehensive medical group and urgent care network, and the region's largest and only locally owned not-for-profit insurance company, Hometown Health. Renown has a long tradition and commitment to continually improve the care and the health of our community. For more information, visit renown.org.

About Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities

Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities is a collaborative of thought leaders and influencers who seek to make an impact on the health of their community. The collaborative seeks to build a model where all community members strive toward a culture of health in the Truckee Meadows. This model will include the intersection of the health, education and community development sectors in our region. Truckee Meadows Healthy Communities seeks to create a healthier community through a collective impact project. [More info can be found here.](#)

About the Washoe County Health District

The Washoe County Health District has jurisdiction over all public health matters in Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County through the policy-making Washoe County District Board of Health. The District consists of five divisions: Administrative Health Services, Air Quality Management, Community and Clinical Health Services, Environmental Health Services and Epidemiology & Public Health Preparedness. [More info can be found here.](#)

Source

1. [Washoe Region Behavioral Health Profile, \(2018\). Figure 54: Death Due to Suicide/Intentional Self-Harm by Age Group, Washoe County, Nevada, and United States, 2012-2016 Aggregate Data: pp. 42.](#)