

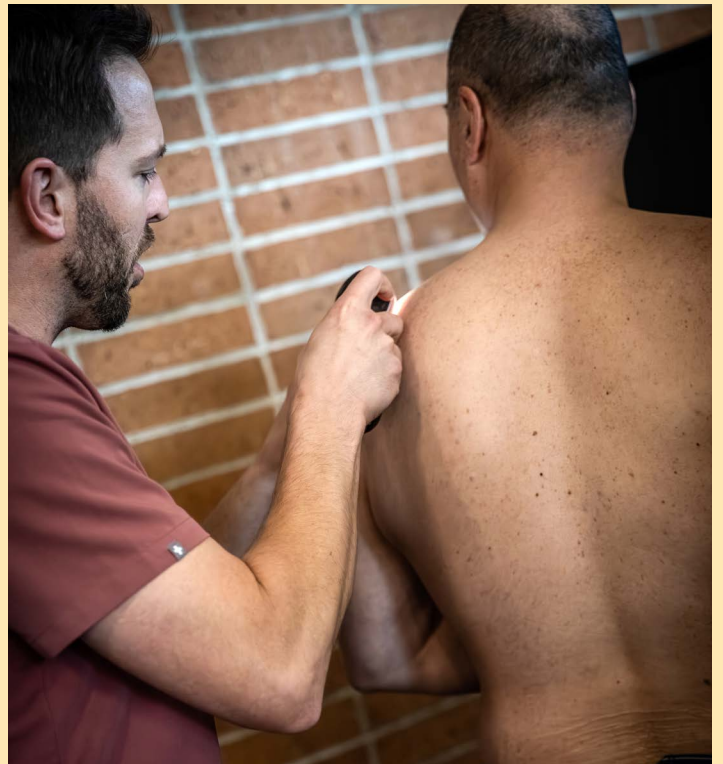
Meeting People Where They Are: Skin Cancer Screening Success Across Nevada

BACKGROUND

Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the U.S. It's estimated that 1,120 people in Nevada will be diagnosed with melanoma in 2026, and thousands more will be diagnosed with basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas.

These numbers have been increasing in the state year over year, in part due to environmental and cultural factors such as more than 300 annual days of sunshine, high elevation, outdoor occupations, and a culture of outdoor recreation, all contributing to its higher risk for skin cancer.

When found early, skin cancer is very treatable, often in a clinician's office. In its earliest stages, melanoma has a 99% survival rate. However, only about one-third of people diagnosed with late-stage melanoma will survive five years after diagnosis. Early detection is key to improving overall survival and preserving quality of life.



CHALLENGE

Nevada falls far below the national average for dermatologists per capita, with 2.3 physicians per 100,000 people versus the national average of 4.5 per 100,000. While Washoe County has more than the national average with 4.9 dermatologists per 100,000 residents, those dermatologists also serve many patients residing in neighboring counties. Most rural and frontier counties across northern Nevada have no dermatologists, and people must travel to more urban counties for services. Elko County, one of Nevada's largest counties geographically, is served by one dermatology advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), one traveling dermatologist in town once a week, and a once a month clinic staffed from University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Appointment lag time for one of these local spots runs at least six months for routine care. In office biopsies are not available.

In addition to a provider shortage, many patients experience barriers to regular skin cancer screening. The screening service is not included as a free covered preventive service under the Affordable Care Act provisions and may be unaffordable to some patients. As with other cancer screening and health services, patients may also be unable to take time off work, uninsured, or have transportation or childcare challenges that prevent them from visiting a doctor or clinician.



OPPORTUNITY

To address barriers to care, Nevada Cancer Coalition (NCC) in partnership with local dermatologists, began taking skin checks into the community. The inaugural Biggest Little Skin Cancer Screening Clinic in Reno in 2024 was first held at the local baseball stadium and most recently at a local shopping and restaurant venue. NCC has also expanded efforts to include two similar clinics in Las Vegas and at a health fair in Elko, Nevada. These free skin cancer screening clinics are provided in easy to access community locations and are free to anyone seeking care.

ELKO ACTIVITY

NCC coordinated with the Sun Smart champions at Skin Cancer and Dermatology Institute office including Brandie Oros, Elko's only full-time dermatology APRN; Dr. Kevin Kiene, M.D. from SCDI's Reno office; and University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine student Randi Owens to host a skin check clinic March 21, 2026 at the annual Elko Health and Fitness Fair. Leveraging this event helped to remove barriers to clinician availability, transportation, childcare, and cost. The addition of these services to this standing, well-attended health fair was celebrated and heavily promoted by the event organizers, resulting in excellent community awareness of interest in skin checks.

In just a four-hour period, the medical team screened 70 individuals for skin cancers. Nineteen people were scheduled for non-urgent follow up within the next six months at the Elko SCDI office. One person was referred for urgent follow up. Because of the urgency of this finding, Dr. Kiene made a second trip to Elko in the weeks following the event to perform a biopsy at the local SCDI office, resulting in a positive early-stage melanoma diagnosis.

Feedback from both the Elko and Reno communities remains exceedingly positive, with additional communities requesting these services.

RENO ACTIVITY

The third annual Biggest Little Skin Cancer Screening was held on May 14, 2026 and leveraged relationships with several different local dermatology offices, including the continued support of Sun Smart champion Dr. Whitney Hovenic. This stand-alone event serves both as a community screening event and an awareness opportunity during Skin Cancer Awareness Month.

The 2026 event was hosted at Reno Public Market, a new location chosen to increase accessibility. Reno Public Market donated the space for the event and heavily participating in event promotion. The event was staffed by 12 clinicians from SCDI and Renown Health to provide screening services and featured a Sunscreen Education Bar, a Tanning Lotion Exhibition, a participant raffle, and a preview screening of the soon-to-be-released IMPACT Melanoma "Conquering Skin Cancer" documentary featuring Nevada melanoma survivor and NCC board member Stacey Escalante.



The event was well attended, with people showing up for the screening several hours ahead of opening time. In total, 190 persons were screened, with 46 referred for non-urgent follow-up and 9 referred for urgent follow-up appointments.

OUTCOMES

Event	# Screened	# of Urgent Follow-ups	# of Non-urgent Follow-ups
Elko	70	1 positive for melanoma	19
Reno	190	9 results pending	46

Nearly one-third of event attendees required follow-up care, which has become the average for NCC's free skin cancer screening events.

DEVELOPING FUTURE CLINICIANS

In addition to extending skin cancer screening to underserved individuals, the skin cancer screening events have yielded another positive outcome: student engagement. Each event is supported by student volunteers from the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine, and in Las Vegas from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine, Roseman University of Health Sciences, and Touro University. Students assist with event promotion, on-site crowd management and patient processing, and can shadow physicians for get hands-on experience providing skin cancer checks with patients. Regardless of planned future specialty, participation in these events improves overall student knowledge of dermatology, further expanding future clinician capacity.

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