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HARRAH'S CHEROKEE TAKES ADDITIONAL STEPS TO BATTLE NORO STOMACH VIRUS

Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel continues to work with the Jackson County Health Department to prevent further spread of the Norovirus that health officials confirmed today.

"While the virus wasn't identified officially until today, Harrah's Cherokee has been cleaning and disinfecting for a week with that outcome in mind," said General Manager Darold Londo. "With guidance from the health department, we continue regular, repeated cleaning in all public areas, our shuttle buses and hotel rooms."

"The Jackson County Health Department has been a valuable partner in these efforts, and we thank officials for their continued assistance," he said.

Norovirus commonly causes this type of outbreak, which is characterized by diarrhea and/or vomiting, sometimes with abdominal pain, cramping, fever, muscle aches or headache. Symptoms usually begin 24-48 hours after exposure to norovirus and resolve on their own after 24-48 hours. There is no specific medication to take, and no vaccine exists.

Those who are affected should drink plenty of fluids and stay home until 48 hours after symptoms stop. People who are still having symptoms after three days should contact a doctor for medical advice. Anyone affected who works in schools, day care, healthcare, or food service must stay away from work for 48 hours and until they are cleared by their employer.

Standard alcohol-based hand sanitizers don't work against norovirus. Hand washing with soap and water is the most important preventive measure for individuals.

Guests and employees showing symptoms of the illness are being referred to Harris Regional Medical Center for testing and treatment.

Approximately 250 casino employees and guests reported stomach virus symptoms over the past week, a period during which more than 80,000 guests and employees were in the facility. Even though the number of those affected constitutes a fraction of one percent of our admissions, we have reacted so as to eliminate the potential to all.

Guests with questions may call the Harrah's Cherokee Service Connection Center at 828/497-7777.

Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel is an enterprise of the Eastern Band of Cherokee, located 50 miles west of Asheville at the entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Harrah's Cherokee Casino is open 24-hours-a-day to guests who are 21-years-of-age or older. For more information about Harrah's Cherokee, please call 1-800-HARRAHS or visit our website at www.harrahs.com.