



Office of the Governor

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Gov. Lujan Grisham holds health care roundtable with local officials in Gallup**

GALLUP – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Tuesday hosted a roundtable discussion in Gallup with local health care providers and elected officials, recognizing the outsized impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the region and discussing how the state can best support the area’s health care needs.

The city of Gallup, and McKinley County as a whole, were disproportionately affected by the pandemic in the spring of 2020, becoming one of the nation’s epicenters of the early pandemic. McKinley County, in fact, still has the highest rate of total cases per 100,000 people.

The county, however, is also a leader in vaccinations – second only to Los Alamos County in the state for the percentage of eligible population who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Officials at the roundtable discussed with the governor the area’s myriad health care concerns and needs and how the state can partner with local entities to address access to and quality of care, as well as the underlying issues contributing to negative health outcomes.

“We know that poverty is a significant driver of health outcomes,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “And we know that McKinley County faces some of the most challenging health circumstances in our state – a high rate of alcohol-related deaths, a high rate of diabetes and a high rate of food insecurity. The pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges. I’m grateful to the local leaders for their willingness to meet with me to discuss how we can enhance access to primary care, how we can invest in meaningful behavioral health treatment, how we can recruit and retain a high-quality health care workforce in the region and so much more. McKinley County has been a shining light in our state’s efforts to vaccinate New Mexicans against COVID-19. I’m so grateful for that ongoing hard work, and I want residents here to know the state will explore every avenue for health care investments.”

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