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State enacts crisis standards of care

Provides clarity, flexibility to patients and providers

SANTA FE - Today, the New Mexico Department of Health announced the enactment of Crisis Standards of Care (CSC) for the state's health care system.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed enormous, ongoing, and unsustainable strain on the state's health care system. In particular, the volume of COVID-19 patients - almost all of whom are unvaccinated - have exacerbated existing staffing and other resource shortages.

What does Crisis Standards of Care mean for patients and providers?

Hospitals and providers are already faced with difficult choices about who gets care. Now, under CSC, facilities statewide will use a more standardized and equitable procedure for making those decisions. In addition, before a facility reaches this point, they must temporarily suspend non-medically-necessary procedures.

New Public Health Order provides flexibility for providers in acute care settings

If hospitals need to move into CSC, the state will also extend limited legal liability coverage to providers who move to higher levels of care. NMDOH will offer a credentialing system for these providers in the coming days.

"Because of COVID, New Mexico hospitals and health care facilities have carried an unmanageable burden. Today, the state is offering clarity and support as providers seek to make difficult choices about how to allocate scarce - and precious - health care resources. The goals, as always, remain the same: to save as many New Mexican lives as possible, and to help sustain the health care providers who have sustained our communities throughout this entire pandemic," said DOH Acting Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D.

Dr. Scrase also emphasized that while CSC modifies hospital and health care facility procedures, patients should still seek the care they need. "If you're sick or think you might be, please, call your doctor," said Dr. Scrase.

Additional clarifying documents about CSC will be available on the DOH website in the coming days.

Additional efforts to support the health care system

Prior to enacting CSC, the State made a range of other efforts to mitigate staff shortages across New Mexico, including connecting hospitals with FEMA for additional staffing resources, contracting with nurses at the state level, and expanding mAbs treatments via FEMA support. Additional measures are planned.

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