



Office of the Governor

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nora Meyers Sackett
Press Secretary, Office of the Governor
nora.sackett@state.nm.us
(505) 690-7313

February 17, 2021

New Mexico indoor mask mandate lifted *Governing school bodies will decide local masking policy*

SANTA FE – Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham on Thursday announced she has lifted the requirement for face coverings to be worn in most indoor spaces, effective immediately.

The indoor mask mandate remains in effect for congregate settings, including hospitals, long-term care facilities and detention facilities. The decision on masking in schools will be left up to governing school bodies, which may elect to keep or suspend masking requirements. An updated public health order, in effect as of Thursday, February 17, is attached to this news release.

“I want to express my gratitude to every New Mexican who has steadfastly worn a mask, gotten vaccinated, and done everything in their power to protect their neighbors, as well as the heroic health care and frontline workers who have courageously supported our communities during this uncertain time,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “Given the continued drop in hospitalizations and the lessening of the burden on our hospitals, it’s time to end the mask mandate. With vaccines, boosters and effective treatment options widely available, we have the tools we need to protect ourselves and keep our fellow New Mexicans safe.”

The number of hospitalized New Mexicans dropped by 37% since the end of January, down to 446 yesterday. The state’s Crisis Standards of Care declaration will expire March 11, as there has been a significant drop in hospitalizations that has increased the availability of resources at New Mexico hospitals.

“We’re turning the corner, and learning a new way to live with COVID together. Thank you for taking care of your communities, your family, and each other,” said **David R. Scrase**, M.D., Acting Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health. “We still need to be careful, get tested, get treatment.”

“We’re grateful to our school superintendents and charter leaders who are at the front lines of keeping students and staff safe. It’s important to us that the decision on masking is made at the school level,” said Public Education Secretary **Kurt Steinhaus**.

Over 85% of New Mexicans are vaccinated against COVID-19 with at least one dose. Throughout the pandemic, New Mexicans have proactively embraced critical tools to support living in a COVID-19 world, including reducing viral spread with the use of at-home tests and self-reporting on [NM Notify](#), accessing convenient oral treatments to reduce hospitalizations, and getting boosted as soon as possible. New Mexicans can schedule their booster by visiting [VaccineNM.org](#).

###



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
Governor

DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.
Acting Cabinet Secretary

**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER
NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
ACTING SECRETARY DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.**

February 17, 2022

Public Health Emergency Order Clarifying that Current Guidance Documents, Advisories, and Emergency Public Health Orders Remain in Effect; and Amending Prior Public Health Emergency Orders to Impose Certain Public Health Measures

PREFACE

The purpose of this amended Public Health Emergency Order is to amend restrictions on mass gatherings and business operations, which were implemented in response to the spread of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”). While vaccines are the most effective method to prevent the spread of COVID-19, masks, social distancing, and self-isolation measures continue to be necessary to protect New Mexicans who are ineligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or who choose not to receive a vaccine. All New Mexicans should continue to adhere to social distancing protocols when required to protect our State as a whole. In accordance with these purposes, this Order and its exceptions should be narrowly construed to encourage New Mexicans continue social distancing measures.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that:

1. All current guidance documents and advisories issued by the Department of Health remain in effect.
2. The following Public Health Emergency Orders remain in effect through the current Public Health Emergency and any subsequent renewals of that Public Health Emergency or until they are amended or rescinded:
 - A. December 15, 2020, Amended Public Health Emergency Order Implementing Additional Contact Tracing Information Requirements for All Laboratories and Submitters Submitting Notifiable Condition COVID-19 Test Results to the New Mexico Epidemiology and Response Division;
 - B. January 8, 2021, Emergency Order Implementing Administration and Reporting Requirements for All COVID-19 Vaccine Providers;
 - C. April 5, 2021, Amended Public Health Emergency Order Temporarily Limiting Long-Term Care Facilities Visitation Due to COVID-19;

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

1190 St. Francis Dr., Suite N4100 • P.O. Box 26110 • Santa Fe, New Mexico • 87502
(505) 827-2613 • FAX: (505) 827-2530 • www.nmhealth.org



- D. February 26, 2021, Public Health Emergency Order Implementing Administration Requirements for All COVID-19 Vaccine Providers and Requiring Accurate Information be Provided by Individuals Registering to Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine; and
- E. December 2, 2021, Amended Public Health Emergency Order Requiring All School Workers Comply with Certain Health Requirements and Requiring Congregate Care Facility Workers, Hospital Workers, and Employees of the Office of the Governor Be Fully Vaccinated and Receive Booster Vaccines.

3. The February 4, 2022, Public Health Emergency Order Clarifying that Current Guidance Documents, Advisories, and Emergency Public Health Orders Remain in Effect; and Amending Prior Public Health Emergency Orders to Impose Certain Public Health Measures is hereby amended as follows:

ORDER

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, because of the spread of the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”), Michelle Lujan Grisham, the Governor of the State of New Mexico, declared that a Public Health Emergency exists in New Mexico under the Public Health Emergency Response Act, and invoked her authority under the All Hazards Emergency Management Act;

WHEREAS, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has renewed the declaration of a Public Health Emergency through March 4, 2022;

WHEREAS, confirmed cases in the United States have risen to more than 77 million and confirmed COVID-19 infections in New Mexico have risen to over 500,000;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a deadly virus and has taken the lives of over 900,000 Americans and over 6,700 New Mexicans;

WHEREAS, the further spread of COVID-19 in the State of New Mexico poses a threat to the health, safety, wellbeing and property of the residents in the State due to, among other things, illness from COVID-19, illness-related absenteeism from employment (particularly among public safety and law enforcement personnel and persons engaged in activities and businesses critical to the economy and infrastructure of the State), potential displacement of persons, and closures of schools or other places of public gathering;

WHEREAS, vaccination, social distancing, and the consistent and proper use of face coverings in public spaces are the most effective ways New Mexicans can minimize the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the potentially devastating impact of this pandemic in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Department of Health possesses legal authority pursuant to the Public Health Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 24-1-1 to -40, the Public Health Emergency Response Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 12-10A-1 to -19, the Department of Health Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 9-7-1 to -18, and inherent constitutional police powers of the New Mexico state

government, to preserve and promote public health and safety, to adopt isolation and quarantine, and to close public places and forbid gatherings of people when deemed necessary by the Department for the protection of public health.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, David R. Scrase, M.D., Acting Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the Laws of the State of New Mexico, and as directed by the Governor pursuant to the full scope of her emergency powers under the All Hazard Emergency Management Act, do hereby declare the current outbreak of COVID-19 a condition of public health importance, as defined in NMSA 1978, Section 24-1-2(A) as an infection, a disease, a syndrome, a symptom, an injury or other threat that is identifiable on an individual or community level and can reasonably be expected to lead to adverse health effects in the community, and that poses an imminent threat of substantial harm to the population of New Mexico.

I HEREBY DIRECT AS FOLLOWS:

(1) Unless a healthcare provider instructs otherwise, all individuals ages 2 years and older shall wear a mask or multilayer cloth face covering in all public hospitals, profit or nonprofit private hospitals, general hospitals, special hospital nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult day cares, hospice facilities, rehabilitation facilities, State correctional facilities, juvenile justice facilities, residential treatment centers, the New Mexico State Veterans' Home, and community homes except when eating or drinking. Nothing in this Order shall be construed as prohibiting any business, house of worship, non-profit entity, or other entity from imposing more stringent requirements.

(2) Any business, establishment, or non-profit (other than those which are a healthcare operation, utility, or indigent care services) which members of the public regularly visit must report to the New Mexico Environment Department when there is an occurrence of a rapid response. The New Mexico Environment Department shall monitor when an entity has four (4) or more rapid responses within a fourteen (14) day period. For purposes of this directive, rapid responses will be counted on a rolling basis. Businesses, establishments, or non-profits with four or more rapid responses shall not be required to cease operations. However, the rapid responses must be reported to the Environment Department so that the public may be made aware of the positive cases.

(3) All businesses, establishments, and non-profit entities must adhere to the pertinent COVID-Safe Practices.

4) Public and private educational institutions serving children and young adults from pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade, including homeschools serving children who are not household members, shall continue to adhere to the face covering requirements contained in the New Mexico Public Education Department's "COVID-19 Response Toolkit for New Mexico's Public Schools," available at <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/reentry-district-and-school-guidance/>, until the school district, governing local education agency, or private educational institution elects otherwise. Public and private educational institutions shall adhere to the other COVID-Safe Practices requirements for in-person instruction contained in the COVID-19 Response Toolkit for New Mexico's Public Schools, and may operate up to maximum capacity. Public and private educational institutions shall follow the reporting, testing, and closure

requirements set forth by the Public Education Department in the COVID-19 Response Toolkit for New Mexico's Public Schools.

I FURTHER DIRECT as follows:

(1) This Order shall be broadly disseminated in English, Spanish, and other appropriate languages to the citizens of the State of New Mexico.

(2) This Order declaring restrictions based upon the existence of a condition of public health importance shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements set forth in the Public Health Act.

(3) Nothing in this Order is intended to restrain or preempt local authorities or state agencies from enacting more stringent restrictions than those required by the Order.

(4) This Order shall take effect immediately and remain in effect through March 18, 2022.

(5) The New Mexico Department of Health, the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and all other State departments and agencies are authorized to take all appropriate steps to ensure compliance with this Order.


(6) Any and all State officials authorized by the Department of Health may enforce this Order by issuing a citation of violation, which may result in civil administrative penalties of up to \$5,000 for each violation under NMSA 1978, Section 12-10A-19.

ATTEST:


MAGGIE TOULOUSE OLIVER
SECRETARY OF STATE

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
THIS 17TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2022

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO


DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE
NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

