



Office of the Governor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Lujan Grisham breaks ground on Behavioral Health Crisis Center

ALBUQUERQUE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Monday joined officials from the University of New Mexico and local elected officials to break ground on the new Behavioral Health Crisis Center, expanding access to psychiatric and behavioral health care for New Mexicans.

A partnership between the University of New Mexico Hospital and Bernalillo County, the Behavioral Health Crisis Center will comprise a nearly 49,000 square foot facility consisting of a crisis triage center, psychiatric emergency services, and a peer-based “living room” model. The crisis center will expand existing programs and address discontinuities in the metro area’s current behavioral health services, providing access to and expanding capacity for both lower acuity and higher acuity patients to form a comprehensive continuum of care for New Mexicans.

“New Mexico continues to rebuild the behavioral health system dismantled by the previous administration,” said **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham**. “We’ve eliminated behavioral health copays for hundreds of thousands of New Mexicans to make services affordable and accessible, and I will continue making critical investments to grow the number of providers and expand delivery of rural services. The Behavioral Health Care Center is another integral step in the right direction for New Mexico.”

“This is definitely a win-win-win situation,” said **Bernalillo County Manager Julie Morgas Baca**. “Bernalillo County, UNMH and the public are all coming together on a long-awaited project offering best practices in behavioral health care for our residents. This county project is delivering on a promise, using \$20 million in county funds and a \$20 million match from UNMH, for construction and continued operation of a centralized behavioral health care facility.”

UNMH CEO Kate Becker said the new facility will help bridge an existing gap in the levels of care for behavioral health patients in the Albuquerque area. “Right now, we have many people who do not meet inpatient admission criteria,” Becker said. “The Behavioral Health Crisis Center will help patients who are not acute enough to be in the hospital, but still need more support than just regular outpatient care.”

The estimated total project cost is \$40 million, equally split by UNMH and Bernalillo County and funded in part by a behavioral health initiative tax passed by Bernalillo County voters in 2014. The facility is expected to be complete in early 2024.

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