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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Behavioral Health Institute in Las Vegas evacuates all 197 patients Monday due to the Calf Canyon and Hermits Peak fires**

SANTA FE - The Behavioral Health Institute in Las Vegas, New Mexico began evacuating patients from its facility early Monday morning due to the rapidly spreading Calf Canyon and Hermits Peak Fires. The fire is reported to have grown to over 120,000 acres and is currently 20% contained. Strong winds and dry conditions present an imminent danger to the facility.

“I want to thank our staff for their commitment, courage and compassion,” David R. Scrase, M.D. acting secretary for the New Mexico Department of Health. “Many of our caregivers live in the area that burned and many still don’t know if their homes are still standing — still, they put their patients first.”

Patients are being transferred to:

- Adult psychiatric patients are being evacuated to the State Veterans’ Home in Truth or Consequences in two of the secured units.
- Long-term care patients are being evacuated to Genesis HealthCare facilities in Albuquerque and Fort Bayard Medical Center in Santa Clara, NM, near Silver City
- Forensic male patients are being evacuated with State Police escort to Santa Rosa
- Forensic female patients are being evacuated with State Police escort to Santa Fe
- Kids at Care are being evacuated to Sequoyah Adolescent Treatment Center in Albuquerque

Patient and associate lines have been established for inquiries about loved ones and family: **505-827-2613 and 505-827-9710.**

“The Behavioral Health Institute was founded in 1889 - before New Mexico was a state - and it is heartbreaking to see this level of fire devastation in our community,” said Timothy Shields, executive director for the New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute. “We are people helping people and are a united

compassionate community of caregivers. Our team worked through the night to quickly and safely evacuate all of our patients and staff.”

The Behavioral Health Institute will remain in close contact with local authorities as teams continue to battle the fires.

We will share additional updates as we receive them.

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**NMDOH**

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The Department of Health works to promote health and wellness, improve health outcomes, and deliver services to all New Mexicans. As New Mexico’s largest state agency, DOH offers public health services in all 33 counties and collaborates with 23 Native American tribes, Pueblos and nations.