



Office of the Governor

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Governor appoints Patrick M. Allen as Department of Health cabinet secretary

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Friday announced the appointment of Patrick M. Allen as cabinet secretary of the Department of Health. Allen will assume leadership of the department Jan. 3, 2023.

“Patrick is a regulator and public health professional with a proven record in improving health care systems, and I have full confidence he will do the same here in New Mexico,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “He shares my vision of a New Mexico that fosters better health outcomes for every resident of our beautiful state.”

Allen has spent more than 30 years in public service, most recently serving as the director of the Oregon Health Authority under Gov. Kate Brown. In that role, Allen significantly improved access to affordable and equitable health care for Oregonians, achieving health insurance coverage for over 95% of residents. He also led the state’s health department throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with Oregon ultimately seeing the second lowest rate of infection in the country.

“I’m grateful to the governor for this opportunity and look forward to working to meet her goal to continue to improve health outcomes for all New Mexicans,” said **Secretary Designate Allen**.

Prior to working at the Health Authority, Allen served in several roles at the state’s Department of Consumer and Business Services, including as director. He has a bachelor’s degree in economics from Oregon State University.

Acting Cabinet Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D., will step away from the Department and continue in his role as cabinet secretary for the Human Services Department.

“I’m grateful to Dr. Scrase for his service to New Mexicans as secretary of the Department of Health. Because of his leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our state had a nationally leading response that saved the lives of countless New Mexicans,” the governor said. “On top of that, the Department of Health undertook numerous other initiatives that are improving health outcomes around the state. Thank you, Dr. Scrase.”

Under the leadership of Acting Secretary Scrase and former Secretary Kathy Kunkel, New Mexico quickly stood up a large-scale testing operation that served as a national model, was among the top states in delivering oral treatments for COVID-19 patients and had one of the country's highest COVID-19 vaccination rates. In the last four years and beginning under the leadership of former Secretary Kunkel, the state reduced the 13-year developmental disabilities waitlist by 84%. Kunkel also successfully resolved the nearly 35-year 'Jackson' lawsuit. The state has also expanded school-based health centers to provide primary care, behavioral health and suicide prevention services for approximately 31,000 students in rural, frontier and socially vulnerable communities.

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