

CLARIFICATION FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR REGARDING TODAY'S (3/18/20) AMENDED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDER LIMITING MASS GATHERINGS AND IMPLEMENTING RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID-19

Today the governor announced that New Mexico Health Secretary Kathy Kunkel will strengthen her previously issued public health order to include additional mandatory closures and guidelines to stem the spread of COVID-19 in New Mexico.

The new public health emergency order, **which will take effect Thursday, March 19**, prohibits gatherings of more than 10 people. The order, which will be signed tomorrow, is attached to this email. Please distribute this order widely.

The order mandates the following:

- Restaurants, bars, breweries, eateries and other food establishments must close to dine-in customers; take-out and home delivery are permitted
- Indoor shopping malls must close
- Recreational facilities, health clubs and resort spas must close
- Theaters must close, including movie theaters
- Flea markets must close

Important stipulations within the order include:

- Typical business environments that are not engaged in the provision of an essential service should limit operations to the greatest extent possible and minimize employee contact.
 - "Typical business environments" are defined as businesses, governmental organizations, political subdivisions and other entities engaged in commercial, industrial, charitable or professional activities.
- Hotels, motels and other places of lodging shall not operate at more than 50 percent of maximum occupancy. This restriction does not apply to operations providing lodging to health care workers who are engaged in the provision of care to New Mexico residents or those businesses providing temporary housing to individuals employed and working in New Mexico.

In addition to the above stipulations, these places are exempt from the order and may remain open:

- Grocery stores and pharmacies
- Shelters
- Courthouses
- Banks
- Correction and detention facilities
- Hospitals and other health-care facilities
- Places of worship (during regular hours)
- Restaurants with exterior entrances that are situated in shopping malls may offer delivery and takeout services.

ON HOARDING: The order, in an effort to limit hoarding, directs grocery stores and other retailers to limit the sale of over-the-counter medications, durable medical equipment, baby formula, diapers, sanitary care products and hygiene products to three packaged items per individual.

INTENT: The new public health order is a means of temporarily limiting person-to-person contact in New Mexico. The order should be construed narrowly; the overriding guidance to New Mexicans is to avoid contact with others in all scenarios except those essential to public health, safety and welfare.

The order is in effect until April 10, 2020, but can be extended as needed.

ENFORCEMENT: The state will ramp up surveillance of businesses to ensure compliance. Violators of the public health order could lose their licenses to operate, face fines or even jail time. New Mexicans wishing to report a violation of the order may call their local non-emergency number and make a report.

Additional advisories and orders will follow as conditions warrant.

On Wednesday, the number of infected people in New Mexico reached 28, including, for the first time, a case presumed to be based on community spread – the term for cases in which the cause cannot be determined.

Per the state Department of Health, the most recent cases are:

- A woman in Bernalillo County in her 80s
- A woman in Bernalillo County in her 40s; the state Department of Health is investigating community spread in this case as this individual had no known exposure
- A woman in Santa Fe County in her 30s
- A woman in Sandoval County in her teens
- A woman in Sandoval County in her 50s

New Mexico health officials strongly advise residents to stay home and to undertake only those outings that are essential to health, safety and general welfare in order to stop person-to-person contact.

New Mexicans who develop symptoms of COVID-19 infection – fever, cough or shortness of breath – should call their health care provider or the NMDOH COVID-19 hotline immediately (1-855-600-3453).

People without those symptoms do not need to be tested for COVID-19 at present. New Mexicans are asked to widely distribute [this information](#) about testing and travel guidelines.

New Mexicans who have non-health-related questions or concerns can also call 833-551-0518 or visit newmexico.gov, which is being updated and finalized as a one-stop source for information.