

Board of Commissioners discusses curfew for county

Written by Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Monday, 13 April 2020 17:05

Due to a spike in recent positive cases of COVID-19, the McKinley County Board of Commissioners held an emergency meeting April 13 to discuss establishing a curfew to aid in slowing the spread of the illness.

Another factor to slow the spread of cases is potentially banning the sale of alcohol during the curfew, in part to the concern of inebriated individuals testing COVID-19 and then going around Gallup with no place to go and thus risking exposing others to the illness.

But, this argument was rebutted during the meeting because the data showed most of the alcohol sales in Gallup occur between 10 am and 4 pm, and the curfew would not go into place until 8 pm through 5 am.

“A complete banning of sales of alcohol sales is, in my opinion, not the answer,” Commissioner Bill Lee said.

The complete ban of sales would put a strain on recent medical facilities and resources needed during the pandemic because bed and ICU space would have to be allocated to individuals going through withdrawals, Lee added.

Senator George Munoz, D-Gallup, was present during the meeting and said the county is looking for the best solution to control the spread of the virus in the transient population, and also added completely banning alcohol sales could make them harder to track.

“The quicker we can control the spread and keep this [transient] population secure in hotel

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rooms and give them treatment, and make sure they're not filling out the hospitals, is the number one thing we can do," Munoz said.

While Munoz said the data shows social distancing is working in lowering the number of cases, the transient population is one that may not listen to those rules.

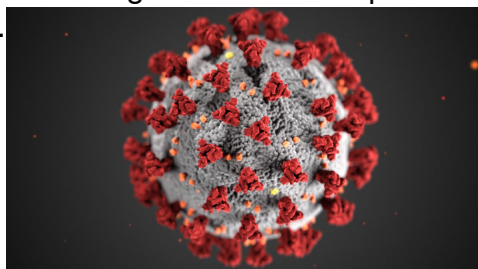
Lee said a solution may be to limit the amount of alcohol that is sold at one time as opposed to only allowing sales during a set time frame.

In the end, Lee chose the ordinance that would establish a ban on the sale of certain alcohol products to aid in slowing the community spread of the virus and urging citizens to self curfew during certain hours.

Both Lee and Commissioner Tommy Nelson said they would want to have weekly update meetings on how the restrictions are affecting the case numbers. Their sentiments were shared by the county chairperson.

"We need to stay on top of this," Chairperson Billy Moore said. "It may change daily, we may have to get stricter or may have to ease some of the restrictions."

The motion to implement the ordinance of banning certain alcohol products and urging self-curfews was passed with a 3-0 vote.



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