SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and state health officials announced July 30 the state of New Mexico will extend its emergency public health order and keep existing public health restrictions and guidelines intact while the state continues to combat the spread of COVID-19.

The emergency public health order retains the state's public health prohibition on mass gatherings and keeps in place temporary indoor occupancy restrictions for certain businesses, particularly indoor "close-contact" businesses such as restaurants and gyms.

Also unchanged is the statewide requirement that all individuals wear face coverings in public and that business operators require customers to wear face coverings upon entrance.

The governor will likewise renew her executive order mandating a temporary quarantine for individuals traveling into the state.

The statewide rolling 7-day case average continues to press the bounds of its highest point since the outset of the pandemic, having increased 41% since July 1; the 7-day average has been steadily increasing since mid-June. The state's rate of spread – expressed as an r-effective, signifying the average number of subsequent infections one infection will reproduce – remains above 1, meaning cases will continue to grow. Three of the state's five public health regions – the northwest, southwest and southeast – have r-effective numbers of 1.6, 1.2 and 1.2, according to the Medical Advisory Team. The metro and northeast regions both had r-effective numbers of 0.9 as of Tuesday.

After decreasing from May to mid-June, New Mexico's reported COVID-19 fatalities are once again rising week-over-week – the state Department of Health reported 36 COVID-19 deaths the week ending July 25 and has reported 25 already this week, through July 29. While ventilator usage has remained steady, according to the state Medical Advisory Team, COVID-19 hospitalizations have also risen in aggregate since early July.

Rapid responses conducted by the state Environment Department and other state agencies continue to increase, with 215 rapid responses to places of employment where COVID-19

exposure occurred during the week of July 20-26. The prior week saw 185 rapid responses, and the week prior to that saw 175. Almost a quarter of the state's rapid responses for occupational exposure – 48 the week of July 20-26 – were reported in the food industries (restaurants, grocery stores and food manufacturing facilities).

The extended public health order streamlines the categories of business operations. Wineries and distilleries will now be classified alongside other food and drink establishments such as restaurants, meaning they may operate under the same requirements: Outdoor and patio seating is permitted while indoor seating and service is not and outdoor tables must be separated by six feet of distance, among other COVID-Safe Practices required for restaurants and eateries.

The emergency public health order signed by Health Secretary Kathyleen Kunkel is effective for 30 days through Aug. 28.

New Mexicans seeking food, economic or health care help – or personal help in any number of areas – are encouraged to visit www.newmexico.gov/i-need-assistance/.

New Mexico small businesses seeking assistance applying for the various programs established by the state may call the state's information hotline, (833) 551-0518, and select option #2.