

New Public Health Order calls for booster shots for workers

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SANTA FE—The latest emergency public health order issued by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham will call for many workers to get booster shots when they become eligible.

The order was issued Dec. 2 and came as the World Health Organization expressed serious concern about the Omicron variant which was newly-identified and is still being studied to determine its transmissibility.

Although experts caution that much remains unknown about the new variant, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has amplified its recommendation on COVID-19 booster shots, saying all vaccinated adults “should” receive one either six months after completing a Pfizer or Moderna series and two months after a Johnson & Johnson shot.

“Early data from South Africa suggest increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant, and scientists in the United States and around the world are urgently examining vaccine effectiveness related to this variant,” Centers for Disease Control Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said. “I strongly encourage the 47 million adults who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated as soon as possible and to vaccinate the children and teens in their families as well, because strong immunity will likely prevent serious illness.”

New Mexico’s state public health policies have for months required that many workers in higher-risk environments – including workers in all health care and congregate-care settings – be vaccinated. Public school workers and state employees, meanwhile, must submit to weekly COVID-19 testing if they are not vaccinated.

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The amended state public health order issued by Acting Health Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D., will require those categories of workers to receive a booster shot.

Those workers must receive a booster dose no later than January 17, 2022, or within four weeks of becoming eligible.

The statewide requirement that face masks be worn in all indoor public spaces remains in place.

New Mexicans can schedule their COVID-19 booster shot at vaccinenm.org/boosters.

Almost 75 percent of eligible New Mexico adults have completed their vaccination series, and more than 85 percent have received at least one shot.

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