

Governor, state leaders discuss progress of public safety initiatives across N.M.

Written by gallupsun

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Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham was joined by several state leaders Oct. 10 to discuss the progress of the public safety initiatives since gun violence was declared a health emergency in New Mexico.

The governor was joined by Secretaries Patrick Allen, Jason R. Bowie, Alisha Tafoya Lucero, Kari Armijo, Teresa Casados and James Kenney, and Senior Advisor Ben Baker and Crime Commissioner Pete Kassetas. During the press conference, state leaders discussed looking at gun violence as a disease, updated the status of gun buyback programs, provided updates on the corrections facilities in the state, how MCOs are working on behavioral health supports within 24 hours, New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department's procedures during the health emergency, and steps for routine wastewater testing for opioids.

"Every single New Mexican deserves to be safe," Lujan Grisham said. "While this public health order is temporary, the results we've seen are proof positive that bold actions work. In the last month, law enforcement officials arrested more than 500 people, preventing further violence in the state. As this work progresses, I call on my partners in the Legislature to be ready - on day one of the session - to work on comprehensive public safety and gun violence legislation so this success continues."

Baker provided some other public safety statistics in Bernalillo County, including:

- 502 arrests
- 20 firearms seized
- 1,370 traffic citations
- Bookings at the Metropolitan Detention Center increased to an average of 53 per day
- 37% of people arrested remain in custody

The success of the public safety initiatives includes a decrease in gunshots detected in Bernalillo County. From Sept. 18 through the 21, 166 gunshots were detected, and from Sept. 25 through the 28th, there were 128.

"This public health crisis calls for us to tap into the spirit of creativity that New Mexico is known for, to unite as a community, and to do everything in our power to halt the spread of this disease and protect the lives of our young people," Allen said.

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During the press conference, the governor previewed a new dashboard from the New Mexico Department of Public Safety. The Bernalillo County Violent Crime Reduction Operation Dashboard is available for all New Mexicans and will show the progress of the Emergency Public Health Order initiatives.

"This data reflects the incredible work from public safety professionals, both between agencies and intra-disciplinary," Baker said. "The number of arrests, seizures of guns, and the increase of violent offenders currently in custody is unprecedented in my experience. The availability of a public-facing dashboard is an excellent tool to continue to monitor our progress and identify things that will increase our efficiency."

