

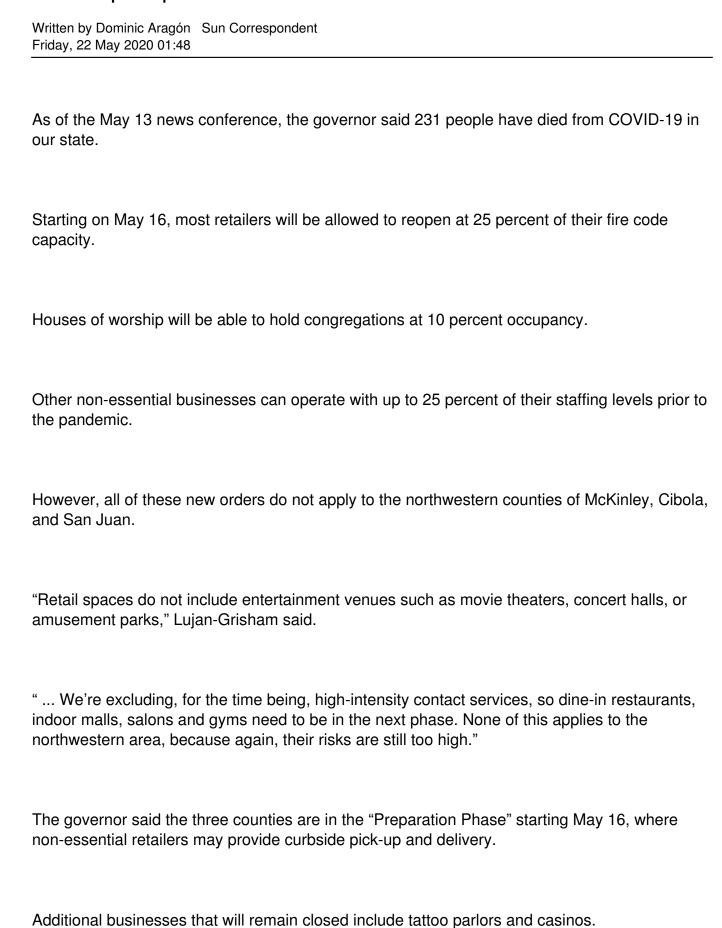
SANTA FE - Gov. Michelle Lujan-Grisham announced modifications to the public health order in our state May 13.

The governor and members of her cabinet met with reporters in a virtual video conference, updating New Mexicans on numbers, modifying requirements for retailers and requiring citizens to wear masks in public.

Present at the news conference was Dr. David Scrase, the Human Services Secretary and Kathy Kunkel, Secretary for the New Mexico Department of Health.

BY THE NUMBERS

As of May 13, there are 5,364 total positive COVID-19 cases in New Mexico. In total, 200 individuals are in the hospital. Fifty-two are on ventilators.



Written by Dominic Aragón Sun Correspondent Friday, 22 May 2020 01:48

The 14-day self-quarantine order for out-of-state airport arrivals remains the same.

MASKS IN PUBLIC

Starting on May 16, New Mexicans will be required to wear face masks and/or face coverings in all public settings, indoor and outdoor.

Exceptions will include eating and drinking at restaurants when dine-in services resume, as well as outdoor exercising.

"It's not a guarantee against the virus. While these mitigate, slow and stop the spread in many ways, it is not a guarantee that you can't give the virus and it's not a guarantee you can't get the virus, because it's not a respirator-type mask, but it really helps slow the spread and that's why we are going to mandate it," Lujan-Grisham said.

The masks do not have to be medical-grade and can be made from materials at home.

INCREASED TESTING

The New Mexico Department of Health is increasing its presence at border towns to help combat the virus.

"You will see an increased presence of the department of health and our partners providing testing in these communities," Kunkel said.

An exact number of increased testing sites was not immediately made available.

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GALLUP AREA

After the City of Gallup went on lockdown earlier in May, the governor stressed the importance of businesses limiting hours and restricting how many people should travel in cars.

"I do think the measures McKinley County took in particular, not only saved lives and bent the curve in Gallup, and in particular in the county, but saved lives in the Navajo Nation, and prevented spread in many of those chapters by closing off the community, while at the same time, being very strong advocates that the state had to take responsibility to the highest degree possible" Lujan-Grisham said to the *Gallup Sun*.

As of May 13, McKinley County has 1,681 cases of COVID-19, the most of any county in New Mexico.

FINDING A VACCINE

The governor said Los Alamos National Labs is working on a vaccine.

"There are a variety of vehicles and research applications occurring in LANL, and we've got some private labs that I know are engaged in consulting that have incredible experience with viruses," Lujan-Grisham said.

"The LANL team is heavily tracking the genetics and the RNA of the virus as it evolves, which you have to do to develop a vaccine to make sure you cover the various expressions of that virus at different places and different times, similar to what we do with influenza," Scrase said.

Scrase said the team at LANL helped develop an HIV-t-cell vaccine.

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Scrase said a COVID-19 vaccine for mass production will take time to develop, noting it could be 15 to 18 months.

"If you're coming up with a vaccine you're going to use to vaccinate the entire world, you have to be extremely careful to note and [flush] out any potential side effects, adverse reactions, you have to know it works," he said.

By Dominic Aragón Sun Correspondent