

NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

STEPHANIE M. RODRIGUEZ
CABINET SECRETARY

May 25, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Higher Education Presidents, Chancellors, and Administrators
FROM: Stephanie Rodriguez, Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
CC: Dr. Patricia Trujillo, Deputy Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Gerald Hoehne, Capital Outlay Director, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Daniel Schlegel, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor (COVID-Safe Practices)
RE: Higher Education Operations in the Red to Green Framework

On May 13, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidance for the use of masks amongst fully vaccinated individuals. Shortly thereafter, the State of New Mexico adopted the same guidance: if you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you can resume activities without wearing a mask or remaining six (6) feet apart, except when required by federal, state, local, or Tribal laws in addition to business and workplace guidance, including higher education institutions.

Since then, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) has been in discussions with our colleagues from the Office of the Governor, the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), and the CDC to gather clear guidance for higher education institutions and other sectors across the state. At this time, nearly all sectors, including higher education, will be adhering to the state's [Red to Green Framework](#).

For information on capacity guidelines for various facilities and venues, please visit the [Red to Green Framework](#) website. For COVID-safe practices, please view the [All Together New Mexico COVID-Safe Practices Guide](#). Additionally, your higher education institution can reference the CDC's "[Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education](#)", which has clear guidance surrounding masks and social distancing guidance in various higher education settings.

It is also clear in the national guidance that students in the K-12 setting will continue to adhere to mask wearing and social distancing practices at a minimum of six (6) feet, and the [New Mexico Public Education Department has adopted the national guidance](#). This is because many children under age 16 have not been vaccinated, and the country is working towards a nationwide effort to vaccinate students ages 12 to 15 at this time. This guidance shall be adhered to any higher education institution or special school providing instruction to K-12 students.

As the state moves toward reopening, we as higher education must also contribute toward the overall goal of having at least 60 percent of New Mexicans fully vaccinated over the next few weeks. Currently, only 29 percent of New Mexicans age 18 to 24 are fully vaccinated. We encourage you to actively communicate with students, faculty, and staff about self-scheduling their free and convenient vaccination appointment at [vaccinenm.org](#). Institutions can also host on-site vaccination events with as few as 25 participants by registering at [getvaxnm.com](#).

The NMHED appreciates your ongoing support of the agency, public health orders, and executive orders, and I want to acknowledge your significant efforts to mitigate COVID-19 spread at your respective higher education institution

and within your community. It has been a heavy lift and although our work is not done, the distribution of vaccines across New Mexico brings hope for relief to our communities.

If you or your colleagues at your colleague or university have any questions, please contact the agency via email at NMHED.COVID@state.nm.us. The appropriate individual will respond promptly.