



July 1, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Public and Private Higher Education Presidents, Chancellors, Directors, and Administrators
FROM: Stephanie M. Rodriguez, Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
CC: Dr. Patricia Trujillo, Deputy Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Gerald Hoehne, Capital Projects Director, New Mexico Higher Education Department
Daniel Schlegel, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor (COVID-Safe Practices)
RE: New Mexico Lifts Pandemic Restrictions

With 60 percent of eligible residents fully vaccinated, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and the New Mexico Department of Health have removed pandemic-related occupancy restrictions and updated the [public health order](#).

In accordance with [guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), which has also been adopted by the State of New Mexico, individuals who have completed their vaccination series and undergone the two-week immunity period may resume activities without wearing a mask or maintaining the six (6) feet of social distancing, except when required by federal, state, local, or Tribal laws in addition to business and workplace guidance, including higher education institutions. All sectors must adhere to the latest official guidance from the CDC. Having a [mixed population of both people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated](#) on campus requires the continued use of prevention strategies that reduce spread.

Below are links to the guidance, handbook, and vaccination toolkit for your use.

1. [Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education](#)
2. [ED COVID-19 Handbook: Strategies for Safe Operation and Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education Students, Faculty, and Staff](#) (Volume 3 –2021)
3. [COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Institutions of Higher Education, Community Colleges, and Technical Schools](#)

It is important to note that although capacity restrictions have been lifted, we in higher education must continue to be diligent in our efforts to increase vaccination rates among students, faculty, and staff to ensure college campuses can safely operate. Currently, only 38 percent of New Mexicans age 18 to 24 are fully vaccinated. We all have an opportunity to actively communicate with students, faculty, and staff about self-scheduling their free and convenient vaccination appointments at [vaccinenm.org](#). We also encourage higher education institutions to host on-site vaccination events for orientations or other



campus convenings. These can be held with as few as 25 participants by registering at getvaxnm.com. Additionally, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) encourages all New Mexico colleges and universities to sign the [White House's COVID-19 College Vaccine Challenge](#). Thank you to those who have taken the lead and signed off on the challenge.

For New Mexico's COVID-safe practices, please view the [All Together New Mexico COVID-Safe Practices Guide](#) (updated June 30, 2021). As noted in the guide, the State of New Mexico has discontinued issuing COVID-safe practices for intercollegiate sports at this time; however, intercollegiate sports teams and programs are required to follow guidance issued by their respective National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) division and conference.

The NMHED truly appreciates your continued promotion and support of the public health orders, executive orders, and vaccination efforts in the state. We understand the significant efforts that have undertaken to mitigate COVID-19 spread and to increase vaccination rates at each of your respective higher education institutions and within your community. We realize how significant this effort has been and we appreciate your ongoing commitment to helping our state move to a brighter post-pandemic future.

A memo will be issued on reporting and rapid response within the coming weeks. If you or your colleagues at your college or university have any questions, please contact the agency via email at NMHED.COVID@state.nm.us. The appropriate individual will respond promptly.