



State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2024-004

RENEWING STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DUE TO GUN VIOLENCE

WHEREAS, New Mexico consistently has some of the highest rates of gun violence in the nation;

WHEREAS, New Mexico's gun death rates rose from seventh highest nationwide in 1999 to third highest in 2021, with the age-adjusted gun death rate increasing by 87% between 2010 and 2021;

WHEREAS, the rate of gun deaths in New Mexico increased 43% from 2009 to 2018, compared to an 18% increase over this same time period nationwide;

WHEREAS, 550 New Mexicans died as a result of gun violence in 2022, and the Department of Health estimates that gun death rates in New Mexico will continue to be significantly higher than rates for the United States as a whole in 2023;

WHEREAS, much of this increase in gun violence is tied to drug addiction; for example, there was a 475% increase in gun-related homicides involving drug dependence from 2018 to 2020;

WHEREAS, children are particularly vulnerable to gun violence, both physically and emotionally;

WHEREAS, guns are the leading cause of death among children and teens in New Mexico, and have recently led to the deaths of a thirteen-year-old girl on July 28, 2023, a five-year-old girl

on August 14, 2023, an eleven-year-old boy on September 6, 2023, a sixteen-year-old boy on December 8, 2023, and a fifteen-year-old boy on December 29, 2023;

WHEREAS, guns also continue to seriously injure New Mexican children and teens, including a seven-year-old boy on September 20, 2023, a six-year-old boy on January 12, 2024, and a five-year-old and seventeen-year-old on February 7, 2024;

WHEREAS, young New Mexicans are contributing to gun violence, with over 1 in 20 high school students reporting carrying a gun in the past year for reasons other than hunting or sport according to the New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, and over 100 juveniles detained for delinquent acts involving a gun in the last four months of 2023;

WHEREAS, New Mexico has also recently experienced an increasing amount of mass shootings, including mass shootings in Farmington and Red River in 2023;

WHEREAS, these gun-related deaths and injuries have resulted in devastating physical and emotional consequences for individuals, families, and communities throughout the State;

WHEREAS, the impact of gun violence extends beyond physical injuries and fatalities—causing emotional trauma, economic burdens, and long-lasting consequences for those affected individuals and their families;

WHEREAS, between 2019 and 2022, there was a 16% increase of patients being admitted to intensive care units and a 61% increase in patients being transferred from emergency departments to the operating room as a result of gun injuries;

WHEREAS, the increasing number of gunshot victims strains our already over-burdened healthcare system and places undue pressure on medical professionals and resources—especially the University of New Mexico Hospital, which is the only level-one trauma center in the state;

WHEREAS, gun violence in rural parts of the state can be particularly deadly and expensive given the time and resources needed to transfer victims to qualified trauma centers;

WHEREAS, Medicaid claims for gun injuries in New Mexico increased by 85% from \$6.5 million in 2018 to \$12 million in 2022;

WHEREAS, the annual estimated overall cost of gun injuries and deaths in New Mexico is \$6 billion, or \$2,818 per capita;

WHEREAS, gun violence is particularly elevated in our state's most populous areas, with over 7,000 gunshots detected in Albuquerque in the last six months, over 300 guns seized in Albuquerque in the past three months, and a 22% increase in gun-related emergency department visits in the metropolitan health region from June 2021 to June 2023;

WHEREAS, Albuquerque has also experienced a recent rise of gun violence in parks, with at least five such shootings reported in 2023 and early 2024;

WHEREAS, in one recent and notable example of gun violence in Albuquerque, the Chief of the Albuquerque Police Department seriously injured a driver while trying to escape gun fire on his way to a news conference regarding the city's crime issues on February 17, 2024;

WHEREAS, after consulting with the Secretary of the Department of Health, the Governor determined that the foregoing situation constitutes a statewide public health emergency of unknown duration, as defined by the Public Health Emergency Response Act;

WHEREAS, the Governor also determined that the foregoing situation constitutes a man-made disaster causing or threatening widespread physical or economic harm that is beyond local control and requiring the resources of the State pursuant to the All Hazard Emergency Management Act;

WHEREAS, the Governor initially declared a state of public emergency for this situation on September 7, 2023, and subsequently renewed the declaration on October 5, 2023, November 3, 2023, December 1, 2023, December 29, 2023, and January 26, 2024; and

WHEREAS, although our Administration has taken swift action to address this public health emergency, including introducing and supporting pertinent legislation during the most recent legislative session, the Secretary of the Department of Health, Governor Lujan Grisham, and I have determined it is necessary to renew the declaration of public health emergency to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Howie Morales, Lieutenant Governor of the State of New Mexico and acting Governor pursuant to Article V, Section 7 of the New Mexico Constitution, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of New Mexico, do hereby **DECLARE** that a state of public emergency exists throughout the State due to gun violence and **ORDER** and **DIRECT** as follows:

1. The Department of Public Health, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and Department of Public Safety shall continue to collaborate with the Office of the Governor to provide an effective and coordinated response to this public health emergency.

2. The Department of Finance and Administration shall make available additional emergency financial resources in an amount not to exceed seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000.00) to the Department of Health, Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Environment Department, Corrections Department, and/or Department of Public Safety, in accordance with NMSA 1978, Sections 12-11-23 to -25. Funds shall be expended for the purpose of complying with this Order and shall be expended specifically to avoid and minimize

economic or physical harm and to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Funds shall be paid out upon warrants drawn by the Secretary of Finance and Administration upon vouchers approved by the Governor or an agent or agency designated by her for that purpose.

3. All mayors, sheriffs, and members of governing bodies of municipalities or counties are encouraged to request, if necessary, an emergency proclamation and implementation of temporary additional restrictions to address this public health emergency pursuant to the Riot Control Act.

4. All political subdivisions of the State shall comply with and enforce all directives issued pursuant to this Order.

I FURTHER ORDER and DIRECT as follows:

1. This Order supersedes any previous orders, proclamations, or directives to the extent they are in conflict.

2. This Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until March 22, 2024.

ATTEST:


MAGGIE TOULOUSE OLIVER
SECRETARY OF STATE

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
THIS 23RD DAY OF FEBRUARY 2024

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE GREAT
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO


HOWIE MORALES
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

