



State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER 2024-141

RENEWING STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DUE TO GUN VIOLENCE

WHEREAS, the United States Surgeon General declared gun violence to be a public health crisis on June 25, 2024;

WHEREAS, according to the United States Surgeon General, 54% of adults in America report that either they or a family member have been threatened with a firearm, killed by a firearm, witnessed someone being shot, shot someone in self-defense, or injured by a firearm;

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 several children and teenagers, including 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, a fifteen-year-old boy on December 29, 2023, a seventeen-year-old on June 30, 2024, a fourteen-year-old on July 25, 2024, and a sixteen-year-old on August 27, 2024;

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, a seventeen-year-old on February 7, 2024, a fifteen-year-old on July 7, 2024, a fifteen-year-old on August 15, 2024, a sixteen-year-old on September 8, 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 250 juveniles detained for delinquent acts involving a gun since September of 2023;

WHEREAS, recent examples of young people committing gun violence include a twenty-one-year-old shooting his stepmother at a crowded high school graduation in Albuquerque on May 9, 2024, a seventeen-year-old shooting another teenager in Albuquerque on June 30, 2024; and a seventeen-year-old shooting a mall security guard in Albuquerque on July 26, 2024;

WHEREAS, the United States Surgeon General reports that the “increasing number of children and adolescents dying from firearm-related injuries and the reverberating mental health impacts on society make firearm violence an urgent public health crisis in America”;

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

WHEREAS, the recent rise in gun violence poses a significant risk of substantial bodily harm or death for law enforcement officers; for example, a New Mexico State Police officer was tragically shot and killed in the line of duty on March 15, 2024, a Roswell police officer was shot on May 15, 2024, and a man shot at least 50 rounds at a New Mexico State Police officer in his vehicle on August 19, 2024;

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, some recent and particularly egregious examples of the impact of gun violence on our healthcare system include a man who shot a woman in the head with an assault

rifle in a vehicle in front of their three children on April 3, 2024, which led to the University of New Mexico Sandoval Regional Medical Center being placed on lockdown for a substantial amount of time, as well as a shooting that happened outside of the hospital in Espanola on April 19, 2024, which also led to a lockdown;

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;

WHEREAS, for example, there has been 22% increase in gun-related emergency department visits in the Bernalillo metropolitan health region from June of 2021 to June of 2023;

WHEREAS, gun violence continues to plague our State's most populous city, Albuquerque, which has reported over 3,200 gunshots detected in July of 2024 alone and over 1,000 guns seized so far in 2024;

WHEREAS, over fifteen guns have been confiscated from Albuquerque Public School grounds so far this year, including one from an intoxicated student at West Mesa High School on May 13, 2024;

WHEREAS, there have been at least 183 arrests of felons in possession of a firearm in Bernalillo county so far this year;

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

WHEREAS, some recent and notable examples of gun violence in Albuquerque include the Chief of the Albuquerque Police Department seriously injuring 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, and a judge being carjacked at gunpoint while trying to load her children in her care on May 29, 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 this declaration has been subsequently renewed on October 5, 2023, November 3, 2023, December 1, 2023, December 29, 2023, January 26, 2024, February 23, 2024, March 22, 2024, April 19, 2024, May 17, 2024, June 14, 2024, July 15, 2024, and August 14, 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, 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. 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.

3. 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 October 13, 2024.

ATTEST:

Maggie Toulouse Oliver

MAGGIE TOULOUSE OLIVER
SECRETARY OF STATE

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
THIS 13TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2024

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

Howie Morales

HOWIE MORALES
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

