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2020-05-29 A Message from Chancellor Roth

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HEALTH SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

Some of us will return to campus on Monday, as we cautiously take a step towards resumption of normal operations.

But we are still early in this process. At this point, please know that if you can do your work from home, you should expect to continue doing so for some time to come. This will be the case for nearly all Tier 2 University employees.

Meanwhile, we are continually evaluating which campus operations to resume – and when. These decisions will be guided by the need to maintain social distancing as a precaution against COVID-19 infection, and our progress in modifying workspaces to make sure employees remain safe.

But each of us must also do our part as individuals to protect ourselves and our coworkers. That includes implementing scientifically validated measures like frequent hand-washing, wearing a mask in public and not congregating in large groups.

And it includes other common-sense measures, like not taking personal trips out of state or traveling to regions of our own state that are still seeing higher rates of infection. It's simple math: if each of us lowers our probability of being exposed to the virus, we lower the likelihood of transmitting it to someone else.

The Reproduction rate in New Mexico is still above 1, which means that the rate of increase in confirmed cases is still advancing, albeit at a slower rate than earlier in March, April and May.

Science would tell us that too rapid a 're-opening' with Reproduction rates above 1 is still problematic. Until we drop below 1 we are still in dangerous territory.

Modifying our behavior may pose some inconveniences at times, but these should be seen as temporary sacrifices for the common good. I believe they are a small price to pay for protecting the vulnerable and diminishing the likelihood of a second surge of cases later in the year.

As an institution dedicated to the mission of improving the health and well-being of everyone in our state, we have undertaken a special responsibility to our community, and now, in the time of COVID-19, I believe we also have an important role to play in modeling safe behavior for others.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul B. Roth".

Paul B. Roth, MD, MS
Chancellor for Health Sciences
CEO, UNM Health System
Dean, UNM School of Medicine

Please visit the [New Mexico Department of Health website](#) for the latest COVID-19 updates.