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Paul B. Roth

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HEALTH SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

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A Message from Chancellor Roth

Dear Colleagues:

Just a few weeks ago, our state was clearly making real progress in “flattening the curve” and slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus, especially in comparison with our neighboring states.

But as Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and top state health officials reported yesterday, the transmission rate has started to climb back up recently. This is clearly very concerning.

Some of the increase may be due to New Mexicans who became infected while traveling out of state. As well, more people are getting out and about after enduring several months of stay-at-home orders, increasing their risk of exposure. As the numbers of COVID positive cases are now rising, I want to remind everyone that we are at maximum capacity with very little open beds due to many factors but mostly trauma cases.

The uptick in cases around us means that the governor’s plans to further relax restrictions and permit public gatherings are on hold for now. For us as a health system, it also serves as a reminder that we must redouble our efforts to keep patients, providers and visitors safe.

The University of New Mexico Hospital has released an [updated visitor policy](#), effective today, that follows guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New Mexico Department of Health. (Para "[Normas de visitas de UNMH por el COVID-19](#)" en [Español, clic aquí.](#))

The policy restates prior requirements for those visiting the hospital: they are required to wear a mask and they must be screened for symptoms when entering our facilities. No visitor will be allowed to enter if they have a fever or are not feeling well.

As before, visitors are not allowed in the Emergency Department, Urgent Care or outpatient clinics (or their waiting rooms) due to space limitations and social distancing rules. Adult inpatients are permitted one visitor, age 14 or older, each day.

There are several noteworthy changes to the earlier policy. Women in Labor & Delivery may now have one significant other and a doula with them in the delivery room. And for pediatric inpatients, both parents or guardians are now allowed in the patient room.

As we've resumed clinical operations, much care is being successfully provided via telemedicine visits, sparing patients the risk of being exposed to the virus – or exposing others. At the same time, our Emergency Department is running at near capacity.

In these difficult times, I want to commend all of our Health System providers and staff for their continuing commitment to meet our state's health care needs.

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.