

Background

This addendum is to the April 27th, COVID-19 in Southeast New Mexico Perspective and Pathway. Refer to the original document for background. This is an update of data through Saturday, May 2, 2020.

Changes in New Mexico

COVID-19 infections continue to grow in New Mexico with the overwhelming majority of new cases in just a few counties. Between Saturday, April 25, and Saturday, May 2, the State count for positive tests went from 2660 to 3732. The largest increases were in McKinley, 408 new cases; San Juan, 275 new cases; Bernalillo, 213 new cases; Sandoval, 45 new cases; Dona Ana, 43 new cases, Cibola, 24 new cases; Santa Fe, 12 new cases; and Rio Arriba, 10 new cases. All other counties had only single digit increases. When compared with population, the “hot spots” stand out. McKinley County had 38% of the new cases but has only 3.5% of the State’s population. Similarly, San Juan County had 25% of the new cases with just 6.1% of the State’s population. Bernalillo County had the third highest number with 20% but as the most populous county, it has 32.4% of the State’s population. The rest of the top eight counties have percentages of increases smaller than their portion of the state population except for Cibola County. Cibola had 2.2% of the increase with just 1.3% of the State population.

Testing data was available at 5 PM on May 2, 2020. It shows significant increases in testing throughout New Mexico. About 20,000 additional tests have been reported between April 25 and May 2. There are some issues with correlating all the tests with the appropriate county. Adding the county test numbers together produces a number less than the reported state wide total. Over 50% of all tests that have been associated with a particular county have been in Bernalillo, McKinley and Sandoval counties. That is to be expected as they have higher population and/or higher case loads.

Changes in SE New Mexico

During the same period, April 25 to May 2, the southeast counties had a total increase of just 15 cases between five counties. This represents 1.4% of the increases for 12.5% of the State’s population. On a daily basis these increases are just slightly more than 2 %. The original data for April 26th was corrected the next day for both Curry and Eddy counties.

Date	Chaves	Curry	Eddy	Lea	Roosevelt	Total	State	% State cases	SE Increase	State Increase	
4/25	22	11	11	10	6	60	2660	2.26%	3	139	
4/26	22	13	13	10	7	65	2726	2.38%	5	66	
4/27	22	12	12	10	7	63	2823	2.23%	-2	97	Correction
4/28	22	13	12	10	8	65	2974	2.19%	2	151	

4/29	22	13	12	10	8	65	3213	2.02%	0	239
4/30	22	17	12	10	9	70	3411	2.05%	5	198
5/1	23	17	12	10	9	71	3513	2.02%	1	102
5/2	23	18	13	12	9	75	3732	2.01%	4	219

Testing has increased in southeast New Mexico with the percentages of population tested as follows: Chaves, 2.13%; Curry, 1.55%; Eddy, 1.35%; Lea, 0.75%; and Roosevelt, 1.9%. The increase in testing supports the validity of the low infection numbers in these counties.

On Friday, May 1, 2020, there were zero COVID-19 patients hospitalized in Chaves County. Only four, all who have been treated and released, have been hospitalized in Chaves County since March 13th. On May 1, 2020, there were 159 hospitalized COVID-19 patients in New Mexico.

Regional Response

The Public Health Order of April 30, 2020, recognizes that conditions are not uniform throughout New Mexico on page 7 under “I further direct as follows”. Both paragraph 4 and 5 differentiate Cibola, McKinley and San Juan Counties. These counties are not able to relax their restrictions from the April 11, 2020 order. This is a positive development and should be recognized and applauded. The same, correct approach, albeit in reverse, should be applied to Southeast New Mexico so that further relaxation in restriction can be implemented. It is equally critical that the State assure businesses that no re-imposition would be implemented for an extended period (possibly six months) so that businesses can be reassured that re-opening investments will not be wasted or in vain.