



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Mexicans with Disabilities Encouraged to Register for COVID-19 Vaccine**

*Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities may register at [VaccineNM.org](http://VaccineNM.org) or by calling 1 (800) 432-2080*

**NEW MEXICO-** The Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) and Department of Health (DOH) have announced that individuals 16 years or older with intellectual and developmental disabilities are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine. This group is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and includes individuals who utilize the DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, Supports Waiver, as well as any New Mexican on the waitlist for these services.

“If you are a New Mexican with an intellectual or developmental disability, you are now eligible for vaccine whether you receive services or not. Please register at [vaccineNM.org](http://vaccineNM.org). The Department of Health will reach out when vaccine is available,” said DOH Deputy Secretary Jason Cornwell.

Studies have shown that complications from and death rates due to COVID-19 for people with IDD are higher than for people without IDD. A study published in the *Disability and Health Journal* found that people with IDD were also more likely to have co-morbidities (such as respiratory diseases) that could lead to more severe COVID-19 symptoms and outcomes.

“We’re very thankful that our Governor is a vocal champion and an aggressive advocate for people living with disabilities. Please remember, registering for vaccine is essential – it tells us what the need is throughout our state and helps us identify people who are more susceptible to the virus,” said ALTSD Cabinet Secretary Katrina Hotrum-Lopez.

“It is critical that the vaccine is available to individuals who are at greater risk of exposure to – and severe illness from – COVID-19. The mortality rate for people with IDD who contract COVID is at least twice as high as the mortality rate for COVID patients without IDD. We applaud DOH’s change to the vaccine registration website that gives people with IDD the option to identify themselves and receive priority in getting vaccinated,” said Governor’s Commission on Disability Director Linnea Forsythe.

To support New Mexicans with IDD, GCD and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council are working with partner organizations and state agencies to educate eligible New Mexicans about the vaccine and set up vaccination clinics across the state. State disability agencies - GCD, Commission for the Blind, Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and DDPC – are also working closely with DOH and ALTSD to make the vaccine registration process and on-site vaccine services more accessible for people with disabilities. This collaboration includes coordinating vaccinations for those who are homebound or need transportation.

New Mexicans can register for vaccine at [vaccineNM.org](http://vaccineNM.org) or by calling the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 1 (800) 432-2080.

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