

**NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ADVISORY**  
**Adverse Child Experiences in New Mexico**  
**October 11, 2022**

**Summary**

New Mexico's (NM) children and youth experience the **highest** rates of ACEs in the nation. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events of abuse, neglect or household dysfunction that occur before 18 years. High rates of ACEs affecting NM's children and other social determinants of health (SDOH) such as poverty, insecure food and housing, and poor access to health care have lasting impacts on mental, physical, and behavioral health. With prevention, early identification, and management of ACEs, risk of suicide and drug overdose can be lowered, and other chronic conditions can be managed more effectively.

**Background**

Large studies have shown that youth with multiple ACEs are at substantially increased risk for substance use disorder, mental health problems, chronic pain and suicide. (1). Many of NM's children and youth live in vulnerable family settings, with more than a quarter of NM's children living in poverty. Rates of familial substance use and domestic violence are higher in NM than the national average. (2,3). The 2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data show that an estimated 67.6% of NM adults have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), and nearly one in four adults (23.8%) have experienced four or more ACEs. (4) Most common ACEs in NM (per the 2019 BRFSS report) are: emotional abuse, physical abuse, mental illness of a family member, and sexual abuse. (4)

**Substance Use Disorder in New Mexico**

In 2020, New Mexico ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the U.S with 801 drug-related overdose deaths. This is a 56 percent increase in 4 years. One of the fastest growing age-groups for drug overdose deaths in NM is people 15-25 years old. (5,6)

**Suicide in New Mexico**

Suicide is the leading cause of death in NM for people age 15-17 years, and the second cause of death for ages 5-14, and 18-35 years. (5,7) In 2020, New Mexico recorded 520 suicides (or 10 suicides per week), and now ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the U.S for suicide. Eleven percent of high school students surveyed reported attempting suicide, while 25% of LGBTQ+ high school students have attempted suicide- in the last year. (5)

**Clinician and Teacher Education in New Mexico**

A crucial step in addressing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), substance use, drug overdose and suicide is training clinicians and teachers serving children and youth. By providing evidenced-based knowledge regarding ACEs and the effects of social determinants of health to all clinicians and professionals who work with children and families, those providers can better assess at-risk youth and implement integrated and culturally appropriate interventions. Early intervention is an opportunity to modify the development of a substance use disorder and maybe prevent suicide.

**To report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect**, Call NM CYFD at 1-855-333-SAFE (7233) For information about the Office of Children's Rights, please call 505-629-9626; email [cyfd.ocr@cyfd.nm.gov](mailto:cyfd.ocr@cyfd.nm.gov)

### Screening

Children/Adolescents can be most effectively screened for ACEs in the care of a licensed behavioral health and/or pediatric medical provider. A biopsychosocial history, in addition to a validated screening tool is considered best practice. For additional information regarding ACES screening tools, please visit: <https://www.porticonetwork.ca/web/childhood-trauma-toolkit/tools>  
<https://www.acesaware.org/learn-about-screening/screening-tools/>

### ACEs Education

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences ECHO at the University of New Mexico is beginning a program this month, October 2022- for all clinicians, behavioral health providers, and teachers
- <https://hsc.unm.edu/echo/partner-portal/programs/new-mexico/adverse-childhood/> Adverse Childhood Experiences ECHO Website and Registration- no-cost CME/CEU
  1. All Hands On Deck ECHO for Adverse Childhood Experiences- 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday every month, MT
  2. Putting Faces to the ACES ECHO - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays every month 12-1pm, MT
- <https://www.annaageeight.org/100-percent-book/> 100% Community
- <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/main/aces-resources>

### Management/Treatment

Youth/adolescent should be referred for consultation to a licensed child behavioral health provider and/or pediatric medical clinician. School-Based Health Centers also have behavioral health providers and staff ready to help and are located in many schools throughout NM's 33 counties.

### For School-Based Health Center Information:

<https://www.hsd.state.nm.us/lookingforinformation/school-based-health-center-managed-care-organization-project/>  
<https://www.nmasbhc.org/school-based-health-centers/>

### For Federally Qualified Health Centers in New Mexico:

[https://npidb.org/organizations/ambulatory\\_health\\_care/federally-qualified-health-center-fqhc\\_261qf0400x/nm/](https://npidb.org/organizations/ambulatory_health_care/federally-qualified-health-center-fqhc_261qf0400x/nm/)

### References:

1. Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American journal of preventive medicine, 14*(4), 245-258.
2. Child Trend Reports, 2019
3. Results First, 2017
4. 2019 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (NM); NMDOH and NM PED
5. The New Mexico Epidemiology Report, The New Mexico Epidemiology Report (ISSN No. 87504642)
6. <https://www.nmhealth.org/data/view/substance/2682/>, Accessed October 10, 2022
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021.

*New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the New Mexico Health Alert Network, click the following link to go directly to the HAN registration page <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2>. Please provide all information requested to begin receiving important health alerts and advisories.*

### EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

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