



What is Really Happening in New Mexico's Hospitals?

Is the COVID surge being portrayed honestly by the media and state officials?

*NM Healthcare Workers
in collaboration with
New Mexico Freedoms Alliance*

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Important factors to consider when assessing the current state of the NM hospital system

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Information Disparity

There is a big disconnect between what the state is reporting and what the healthcare workers are actually experiencing.

Herein we will share the healthcare workers' perspectives.



Are NM hospitals really overflowing?

Staffing shortages are limiting the available hospital capacity.

Many hospitals have more beds than can be staffed.
For instance:

- Three Crosses Hospital in Las Cruces has 25 beds that cannot be staffed.
- The 10th floor of Lovelace Hospital Downtown in Albuquerque is closed due to staffing shortages.



Are NM hospitals really overflowing? (cont.)

Staffing shortages are limiting the available hospital capacity.

The reports on available hospital capacity are misleading.

- These reports are taking into account only the number of beds that can be staffed, not the total number of beds in the hospitals.
- Staffing shortages, and not COVID surge, are limiting the number of available beds in the hospitals.

NEWS

Thousands of nurses and hundreds of doctors needed in across state

Austin Fisher Source New Mexico

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Mental health is just one part of the problem; New Mexico's entire health care system is plagued by shortages, and nearly every county in the state does not have enough primary care physicians or nurses, researchers from the state's Health Care Workforce Committee told lawmakers.

"There are massive shortages in every health care sector in the state," said Dr. Richard Larson, executive vice chancellor of the UNM Health Sciences Center.

As things stand, New Mexico needs:

- 6,223 registered nurses or clinical nurse specialists
- 2,510 emergency medical technicians
- 524 physical therapists
- 521 pharmacists
- 328 primary care physicians
- 249 physician's assistants
- 238 certified nurse practitioners
- 117 psychiatrists
- 108 occupational therapists
- 87 dentists
- 56 obstetrics and gynecology physicians
- 13 certified nurse midwives
- 10 general surgeons
- 5 licensed midwives

In 2020, only six of New Mexico's 33 counties were at or above the national benchmark of 8.3 primary care physicians per 10,000 people: Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Socorro, Colfax and De Baca. The counties with the worst rates were in the northwest and southeast parts of the state.

“Med/surg and telemetry floors are short staffed so they are unable to use all their beds, ICU is short staffed and usually has to triple the patients with 1 staff when normally ICU is a 2:1 patient ratio.”

“ER is short staffed and most nights running a 23 bed department with only 3-4 nurses when it should be at least 7 nurses.”

~~Healthcare Worker from Mountain View Regional Hospital in Las Cruces



How do staffing shortages affect patient care?

Staffing shortages are negatively affecting patient outcomes.

Nursing shortages lead to:

- Lack of continuity of care for patients
- Errors in patient treatment
- Higher rates of morbidity and death

“Patients are having to be held in the ER for extended periods of time, until beds become available upstairs once patients are discharged, instead of utilizing all the beds available because of lack of staff.

“There have already been 2 sentinel events [patient safety events that result in serious harm or death] in the ER recently, due to lack of staff, that Joint Commission is currently investigating.”

~~Healthcare Worker from Mountain View Regional Hospital in Las Cruces



Are COVID-19 patients filling NM hospitals?

COVID patients make up only a small percentage of the hospital admissions.

In hospitals around the state, COVID patients are only a small subset of those in the hospital.

For instance, in early September:

- Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque had less than 8% of beds occupied by COVID positive patients
- Mountain View Regional Hospital in Las Cruces had 15 COVID patients out of 163 total beds.
- At UNMH in Albuquerque, there were 47 COVID patients out of 554 total full beds.



Are COVID-19 patients filling NM hospitals? (cont.)

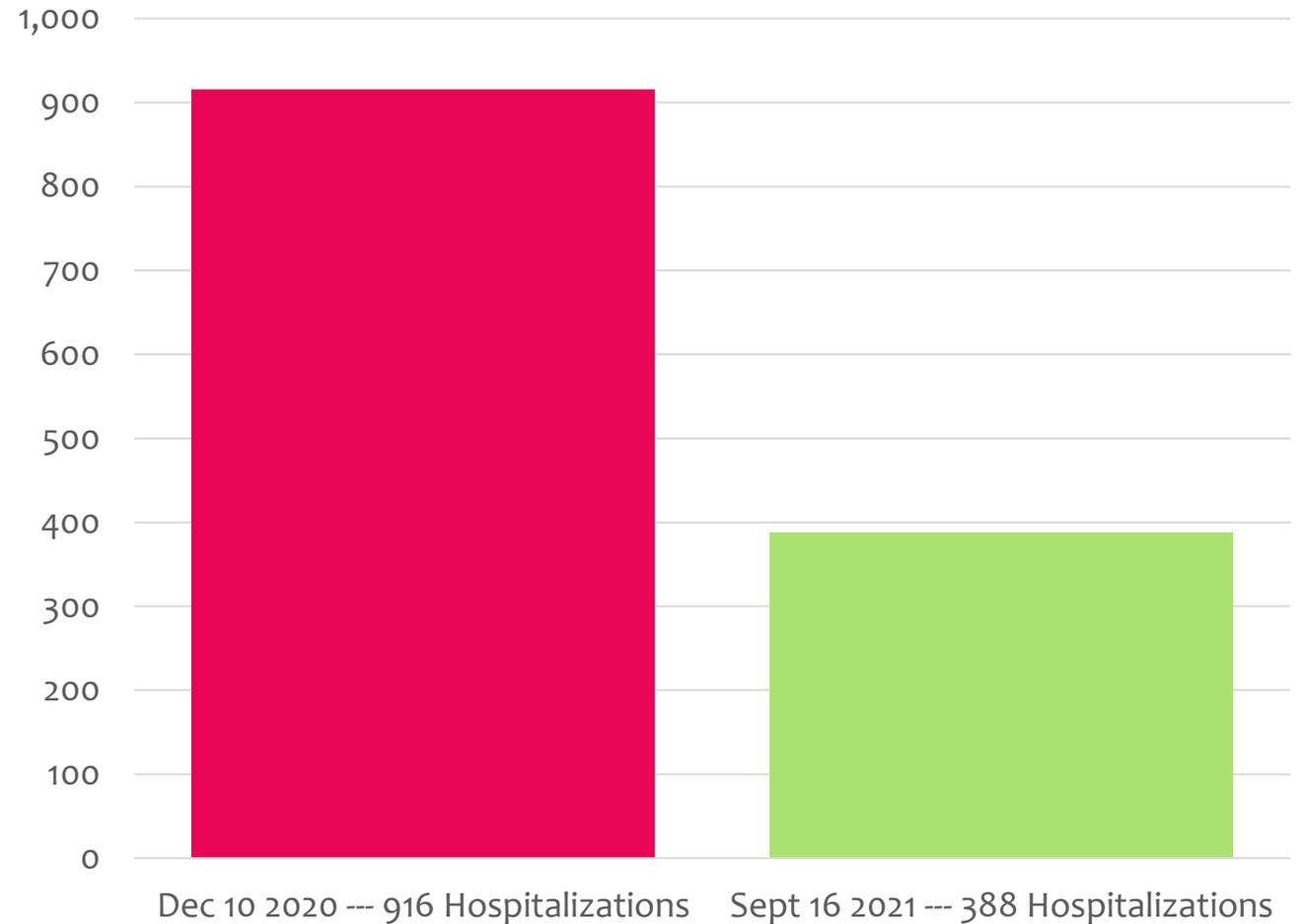
COVID patients make up only a small percentage of the hospital admissions.

Many of the “COVID patients” in hospitals are not actually symptomatic for COVID, but are in the hospital for unrelated reasons.

Additionally, nurses are reporting that COVID positive patients are being brought into NM hospitals from Mexico and other states.

NM COVID-19 Hospitalizations

How does the current Delta surge compare to the peak number of COVID-19 hospitalizations in New Mexico?



“Many of the patients with a positive test do not have signs or symptoms of the virus and were simply discovered on routine COVID testing.”

~~UNMH Adult Critical Care Respiratory Therapist



Is it really a “pandemic of the unvaccinated”?

Healthcare workers are seeing a significant number of vaccinated COVID patients.

NM Healthcare workers are reporting that 50-75% of those hospitalized with COVID-19 are vaccinated.

These numbers are in stark contrast to the numbers being reported by the State.

“We are seeing a lot of people come in with COVID symptoms and a positive COVID test who tell us they are vaccinated.”

~~NM Healthcare Worker



What's wrong with the vaccine mandate for healthcare workers?

Vaccine mandates are discriminatory and violate the right of bodily autonomy.

Vaccine mandates go against the latest science:

- Many healthcare workers already have robust natural immunity from previous infection.
- Vaccines do not prevent transmission of the illness. This has been well documented and is even more of an issue with the Delta variant (which is being spread very easily by vaccinated people).

“We have open beds that cannot be utilized because we just do not have the staff to open up those beds. In a state that was already critically short staffed of medical professionals, these mandates have only crippled our system even more.

“Nursing shortages cause an increase in nurse to patient ratios, which lead to increased risk of harm to the patient. New Mexico residents deserve better care than this. Please stop the vaccine and testing mandates, and just let us continue to work the same way we have been for the past year and a half maintaining the same precautions that we have been using from the start.”

~~Registered Nurse from Three Crosses Hospital in Las Cruces

What's wrong with the vaccine mandate for healthcare workers? (cont.)

Vaccine mandates are discriminatory and violate the right of bodily autonomy.

Vaccine mandates will worsen the healthcare staffing shortage.

Healthcare workers who are ready and able to work are being placed on leave without pay due to their vaccination status.



“Recent mandates to vaccinate healthcare workers have driven many out of the industry. As a charge nurse in a busy emergency department, I received numerous on-the-spot resignations from nurses and healthcare workers who refused to work under such mandates and in the face of such gaslighting abuse.

“If the nursing shortage is this dire, how can we allow ourselves to behave in a way that disenfranchises so many to the point that they leave the profession?”

~~ Registered Nurse from Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque



What's wrong with the vaccine mandate for healthcare workers? (cont.)

Vaccine mandates are discriminatory and violate the right of bodily autonomy.

Vaccine mandates prevent Informed Consent.

- Many people have health conditions which have not been thoroughly tested in the clinical trials, including autoimmune disease, pregnancy, and breastfeeding.
- Vaccine development generally takes 5-10 years, and it cannot be accelerated to determine the long-term impacts. There are no long-term safety studies. The signals for chronic health impacts (such as cancer and autoimmune diseases) do not show up clearly until years into the clinical trials.

“Stand by us the way we have stood by you in the hardest time in our careers. Support us in making the best choices for ourselves. Show us that we are valued as humans, not only as healthcare workers.”

“Uphold our rights to bodily autonomy, without forced vaccination or testing. We will continue to protect our patients, your organization, and our community the same way we have for the last 20 months.”

~~ Registered Nurse from Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque

