

TO: Corps of Cadet, Staff and Faculty

FROM: MG Jerry W. Grizzle

DATE: 5 March 2021

Re: Evolving Restriction Changes

Each time I distribute an update, I point out that it is virtually impossible to walk the reader through the changes between updates. The changes happen too frequently and can reverse themselves, or before you can develop a response or reaction to a change, it has changed. Each update is a snapshot of the status of events at that moment in time.

Since my last update of one week ago today, many changes have occurred that can impact us here at NMMI, impact us as residents of Chaves County and the State of New Mexico.

I want to remind all readers that the protocols and restrictions that we must abide by here at NMMI are directly correlated to the protocols and restrictions in the current Health order in place in New Mexico or protocols and provisions established at the national level by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Some of my comments are recaps of events that have occurred, but you cannot stay up with the current situation if you don't understand those. Several months ago, the Governor of New Mexico developed a county-by-county matrix that allows each county to have an element of control over how and when they can return to regular operations. The county is judged by its performance in testing, contracting the virus, recovery, vaccination, etc. If your county meets certain criteria, you move through color-coded variations of relief from the Health order restrictions. There are four levels; red, yellow, green, and turquoise.

Last Friday, after I had released my update, Chaves County moved from "Red" to "Yellow." I won't go into all of each color code's provisions, but here are a couple of changes from red to yellow. The most dynamic is restaurants can go back to inside dining with a 33% of capacity limitation. They can still use outside dining with a 75% capacity limitation. We can now attend outdoor Junior College sporting events in New Mexico at a 33% of venue capacity limitation. Here is a link that will explain each of the four-color criteria and what restrictions exist at each level.

<https://cv.nmhealth.org/public-health-orders-and-executive-orders/red-to-green-framework>

Last night at approximately 8:00 pm, the New Mexico Activity Association (NMAA) that governs High School sports announced they would follow the color-coded guidance and allow attendance at outdoor sporting events. At the current color-coded level of Chaves County, neither level of sports, Junior College, or High School can have indoor spectators.

For tonight's High School football game against Dexter on Colt Field. We had planned, by following the NMAA guidance at the time, for no outside spectators. This included our own Cadets and employees. We established the concrete track as the barrier line. The only people authorized inside the track would-be players and coaches and anyone with a defined purpose; officials, individuals running the chains, etc. Our Cadets would be limited to watching from Saunders' second and third stoop, provided they wear a mask and practice social distancing. We simply do not have time to alter this planning. The

Colts have another home game in two weeks. If Chaves County stays at least yellow, we can plan to have Cadets and employees, up to the allowed percentages, attend the game.

In contrast, the Junior College guidelines regarding outside sporting events and spectator participation have been published for some time. When Chaves County achieved yellow, we were able to consider allowing spectators. Since the baseball field is across from the main campus and access can be controlled, without the possibility of the general public exposing Cadets to the potential of contracting the virus, we started planning for and decided to allow spectators. So, you will see spectators in the stands at the baseball field this weekend. We will be limited to 25% or approximately 180 based on the overall capacity of the stands and the bleachers.

My position for the last year has been that we must all be here, work within the restrictions, policies, practices, and protocols of compliance of the Health order so that as the restrictions are lifted, we can respond. It is impractical to think we could all be screened, tested, even vaccinated, at home, and wait for the green light to return to NMMI. We are here, we are all tested, we are constantly screened, and many are now vaccinated. As these restrictions are adjusted because all of these preventative measures, locally and nationally, have a positive effect, we are positioned to respond.

I will not project or predict. That is impossible to do because we do not control any of the metrics used to adjust the color-coded system, except our own.

As residents of Chaves County, our screening, our testing, and our testing results are reported against Chaves County's overall results. We must continue to be diligent in our efforts here at NMMI. We must wear our masks properly, and we must practice social distancing.

If we, all of us, want to continue to position ourselves to be able to take advantage of the easing of restrictions if Chaves County moves from yellow to green or green to turquoise, we must show that we are capable of handling these new freedoms. Diligence in the existing restrictions is what we must do. Other than the common sense caution of wash your hands frequently, use the hand sanitizers provided all over the Post, don't touch your face with your bare hands. The two things we must continue to do are wear the mask properly and practice social distancing.

Many of you may have seen that other states are removing the requirement to wear a mask. With the current Administration of New Mexico and the Advisors to the Administration, I do not see that happening in New Mexico.

We are still the most restricted state in the nation, and we should not count on those two criteria being lifted or eased regardless of the color-coded level we achieve as a county.

In closing and summary I ask that you abide by the current requirements and restrictions. Wear your mask properly, practice social distancing. Demonstrate that if we are afforded the opportunity to move to a less restrictive posture that we can handle that responsibly.