

Sunday  
Feb. 28,  
2021

# COVID-19: ONE YEAR LATER

THE EASTERN NEW MEXICO NEWS



Staff photo: Kevin Wilson

Raylynn Heflin breads mushrooms as prep work Monday afternoon at A.J.'s Wings in Portales. The local eatery took a hit during the pandemic and its shutdowns of indoor dining, but managers said they were fortunate to have already established delivery.

## LESSON LEARNED: DON'T POSTPONE FUN

By Kevin Wilson  
EDITOR  
kwilson@thenews.email

In discussions with various leaders of entities most involved with impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, The News asked a simple question as the one-year anniversary approaches:

If you could go back in time one year and talk to yourself for 15 minutes, what would you try to tell yourself?

■ “You should have retired,” Portales Schools Superintendent Johnnie Cain said before giving a serious answer about how it would have been difficult.

■ “Never postpone fun, hug everyone and celebrate everything,” Clovis/Curry County Executive Director Ernie Kos said. “And definitely focus on what really matters.”

■ “Hold on tight, because you’re about to go on the rollercoaster ride of your life,” Plains Regional Medical Center Interim Administrator Jorge Cruz said. “It’s crazy to think a year has gone by, but a year ago we had already started planning for the COVID surge.”

The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in the United States on Jan. 21, 2020. But for most residents of eastern New Mexico the pandemic started when high school basketball players competed for state titles in a mostly empty University Arena in Albuquerque last March.

For about nine months, any event larger than a family game of Monopoly ran afoul of mass gathering restrictions and most organized sports and enter-



Staff photo: Kevin Wilson

Kylee LaVigne, an education assistant with Clovis High School, helps junior Rudolfo Romero find a class Feb. 19. That was the first day all grade levels were able to begin in-person instruction. The state allowed districts to enter hybrid mode for all grades Feb. 8, and the district's plan to begin Feb. 16 was dashed by inclement weather.

tainment events were wiped off the map — including the Clovis Music Festival, Portales' Peanut Valley Festival, the Custom Classic softball tournament, months of in-person instruction at Eastern New Mexico University and all prep and college athletics.

Education moved from classrooms to Chromebooks. Face coverings, with various levels of compliance, became as commonplace as shirts and shoes. And in case you forgot just how far 6 feet is, floor markings everywhere

remind you.

By late February, the pandemic had infected close to 200,000 New Mexicans and caused more than 3,600 deaths — nearly 5,000 cases and 66 deaths in Curry County, and nearly 2,000 cases and 50 deaths in Roosevelt County.

The News spoke with officials in the areas of business, education and healthcare, three of the most impacted parts of the pandemic as the one-year anniversary approaches — or has already passed, depending on what one

considers the starting point.

### Business

There's no surefire way to know how many businesses were lost due to the pandemic, since private businesses close for various reasons and aren't obligated to explain. The city of Clovis provided The News with business registration invoices sent in recent years for some level of context.

The city sent out 2,761 Jan. 1 invoices for business registrations this year, compared to 2,933 in 2020, 2,932 in 2019 and 2,898 in 2018.

Kos noted Clovis did lose its Dillards location and Harley-Davidson dealership in 2020 due to factors larger than COVID-19, but the pandemic certainly didn't help. As far as businesses that were impacted, Kos said, hotels and restaurants felt the brunt of COVID impacts and few businesses were immune to effects.

But there were notable exceptions.

“Some of the essential businesses have had their best years ever,” Roosevelt County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Karl Terry said.

“Grocery store shelves were bare for a time as more people ate at home. More people at home with stimulus money meant hardware and nursery stores business increased as home projects and gardens were launched. Our community really answered the call to shop local and I know some retailers and even restaurants with drive-thru have had

YIR on Page 2C

A collage of local business logos. On the left is a circular logo for "SUPPORT Local BUSINESSES". To the right are logos for "THE CITIZENS BANK OF CLOVIS", "Interim HEALTH CARE HOME CARE AND HOSPICE", "Clovis Family Healthcare", "BeeHive HOMES", "Buena Vista Realty", "C&S", "Community HomeCare", "PORTALES", "Roosevelt County Electric Cooperative", "LA CASA FAMILY HEALTH CENTER", "GOODLIFE SENIOR LIVING & MEMORY CARE", "WHEELER MORTUARY", and "YUCCA".

**YIR****from Page 1C**

good years as well."

Businesses not determined to be essential were shut down in the spring, and briefly in November when infection rates spiked.

There was no one particular challenge for businesses, Kos said, but rather the combination of ever-changing factors.

"I think it was just the rollercoaster, especially for restaurants," Kos said. "You're totally closed, and then you can do certain percentages outdoors, then you go back indoors."

If he could have a mulligan on 2020, Terry said he would have worked earlier to organize virtual events and meetings, and pressed harder to keep things open in the spring and summer.

"With some precautions I don't think most events in spring and summer posed that great of a risk," Terry said. "We could have avoided the quarantine fatigue. We did press that point pretty hard, though."

As far as things that will stay in place once the pandemic ends, Kos and Terry both pointed to continued use of virtual meetings. Although Terry doesn't think local events like city and county meetings will remain exclusively online, he does believe virtual meetings will be more commonplace in trainings and other meetings that would otherwise involve lengthy car trips. Kos said she and other chamber representatives frequently spend time in

Santa Fe during legislative sessions, but that the virtual format has led to more face-to-face time with legislators and nobody's got a car trip or an unfamiliar hotel room to deal with.

"As much as people are over virtual meetings and Zoom calls," Kos said, "one of the benefits is it's promoting remote working. It's more popular now that everybody's up to speed."

**Education**

It was March 13 — a Friday the 13th — that the Public Education Department announced it would require all school districts to extend their spring breaks for three weeks and hopefully return with the pandemic under control.

Suffice to say, that didn't happen. Classes moved online, graduations moved to parking lot and virtual ceremonies and it wasn't until February that all grades had the opportunity for in-person learning.

Every week has brought its own set of challenges, including implementing online programs on the fly in April.

"We had to provide training to teachers and have teachers work with parents and students as to how everything would work," Cain said.

"Teachers had to decide how they would deliver lessons and assignments and then evaluate and provide feedback on work that was done. Our teachers worked together and between schools to find best practices to get this done. Yet, one of the most challenging parts was trying to make sure

students had the means to receive an education virtually."

Clovis Superintendent Renee Russ said on multiple occasions that pushing education into broadband and individual homes only highlighted the struggles for disadvantaged families.

"Having the light shone on this inequity," Russ said, "may be one of the few gifts of the pandemic."

Cain said federal funding helped the Portales district buy additional Chromebooks and wireless hot spots, and local Internet providers worked with school districts to provide free service for families who need it to do school work.

A key challenge, Cain said, has been staying in contact with parents.

Families haven't been difficult, Cain said, but often the guidance would change so frequently the thing they'd tell parents on a Tuesday wasn't true on Wednesday.

While some students may end up staying in online options when the pandemic ends, Cain doesn't see it as a workable future.

"I don't believe online instruction is something we should go to as a standard anytime soon," Cain said. "Part of education is not just the instruction, but the social aspect, and probably even more important, the structure."

A young child, Cain said, often lacks the discipline to stick with an online lesson when at-home distractions provide alternatives, and it's unfair to expect parents to either provide constant supervision or spend countless hours after



Courtesy photo

Plains Regional Medical Center Retail Pharmacy supervisor Amy Kelley, left, provides a Moderna vaccine to pharmacist Colton Dant.

working a long shift to help their children for hours with lessons.

"That's why being in school physically is so important," Cain said. "It takes the pressure off of parents and there is a structure in which kids know what they are doing, have the resources they need, and the oversight of a teacher who knows the topic."

Cain did wish, in retrospect, that the state would have had more faith in local districts and boards to determine their own ways to safely reopen schools.

**Healthcare**

Cruz, elevated to the interim administrator role early on in the pandemic, said there was plenty of negative from the pandemic but many notable positives — including a

near-eradication of the flu season because of COVID-safe procedures and the community simply recognizing the job PRMC workers were doing.

"The support and the recognition from the community was definitely a welcome sight through some tough times," Cruz said. "Their support was there from Day 1. It was rewarding for us, and at the very least gave us the fuel to push through tough times."

Probably the biggest challenge from COVID-19 was a side effect of the surge. Patients PRMC would traditionally transfer to larger hospitals stayed at PRMC because those hospitals didn't have room for them.

"We had to care for sicker patients," Cruz

said. "I feel like we did that and did it at a very high level. Our staff did that and gained some valuable skills and knowledge."

Cruz agreed virtual meetings will become commonplace post-pandemic. In addition to continued social distancing and enhanced hygiene, Cruz believes virtual medicine is here to stay as well. After all, your own living room is more comfortable than a sanitized waiting room.

"Telehealth became very big during the pandemic, obviously to lower exposure risks," Cruz said. "It was something that became extremely popular and much more effectively used. I think it will continue to grow, even post-COVID."



# Clovis Family Healthcare



**Dr. Jon Shrader** passionately cared for the Clovis community for 21 years. He had a big heart and always wanted to help others by providing compassionate and quality healthcare. He looked for the best in others and gave the best he had. He made this world a better place.



THANK YOU to everyone at Clovis Family Healthcare for continuing Dr Shrader's legacy, and for all healthcare teams and frontline workers looking out for this community.



*You all make this world a better place.*



**Erika S. Potts**  
MSN, RN,  
FNP-BC



**Joy Felty,**  
APRN, MSN,  
FNP-C



**Johanna Pettrey**  
FNP-BC



**Amanda Elam,**  
MSN,  
FNP-C



**Aaron Lockmiller**  
NP-C

**Services**

- On-site laboratory • In office x-ray and bone density testing
- Evening & weekend walk-in clinic • Annual exams & checkups
- Physicals • Preventive health exams • Minor procedure



Call us today for an appointment: 575.762.4455

**Contact**   
2301 North MLK Blvd.  
Tel 575. 762.4455  
Fax 575.762.8411

**Appointments**  
Mon-Thurs 8am-5pm  
Fri 8am-12pm

**Walk In Clinic**

Mon-Thurs 5pm-7pm  
Fri 1pm-5pm  
Sat 10am-3pm

# HOW DINERS CAN PREPARE TO GO OUT AS RESTAURANTS REOPEN

**M**any communities across the globe have begun to gradually reopen. That's good news for the millions of small businesses that have struggled as the world responded with extreme caution to prevent the potentially deadly COVID-19 virus from spreading.

Estimates from the National Restaurant Association indicate that restaurant sales in the United States decreased by tens of billions of dollars in March and April, while forecasts predicted those numbers would be in the hundreds of billions by the end of the 2020. In recognition of the vital roles restaurants play in building and fostering strong communities, consumers are looking forward to returning to their favorite establishments as economies slowly reopen. Diners can do their part to make reopening efforts successful and sustainable by staying home if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. Venturing out while symptomatic

puts everyone, including restaurant workers and fellow diners, at risk, so it's imperative that people pay attention to their bodies and avoid going out if they are experiencing even mild symptoms.

In addition to staying home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, diners can take these steps to work in partnership with local restaurants as these vital components of the community begin to reopen.

■ **Dine out in small groups.** Phase 1 reopening guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended gatherings be limited to no more than 10 people. But when dining out, consumers should keep their groups even smaller. An assortment of studies from the CDC have found that the virus is easily spread among groups of people in enclosed spaces. By limiting dinner parties to no more than the number of people in their households,



consumers can help restaurants safely reopen.

■ **Wear masks.** Wearing a mask to a restaurant may seem odd, but by keeping their mask on until their food arrives, diners can help prevent the spread of the virus. The World Health Organization notes that it's believed the virus can spread through small respiratory droplets produced while talking or laughing. So diners can keep themselves and fellow customers and restaurant workers safe by wearing their masks until their food arrives.

■ **Remain patient.** Life in the era of social distancing requires significant adjustments, and restaurants reopening will be adjusting right along with everyone else. Afford restaurant staff ample patience and go along with any protocols restaurant owners put in place. All measures are aimed at keeping customers and staff safe while getting people who have been out of work for months back on the job. Each of those goals is worth the patience it may take to help restaurants achieve them.

■ **Order takeout.** If you're uncomfortable visiting a local restaurant in person or frustrated by potentially long wait times for a table, order takeout instead. Restaurants need the business after a very rough stretch, and consumers can benefit greatly from a night off from cooking.

Local restaurants are reopening in communities across the globe. Supporting these businesses can be vital to local economies and help millions of people return to work.



**Grateful to All Our Hometown Heroes & Local Businesses!**

**WHEELER MORTUARY**

500 E. Third • Portales, NM

Serving the families of Roosevelt County Since 1924.

For Current Funeral Service Arrangements & Times  
**575-356-1234**

For 24 Hour Assistance & Information  
**575-356-4455**  
[www.wheelermortuary.net](http://www.wheelermortuary.net)

Got an Uh-Oh?  
Call Sambo!

LIC#NM383349

**A & A**  
Plumbing and Septic Services LLC

**Thank You to the Community for Keeping Us Going!**

**Give Us A Shout,  
We'll Help You Out!**

**575.219.2683**

**GOOD LIFE SENIOR LIVING & MEMORY CARE**

Pioneer Village would like to thank everyone that has been a part of getting our facility up and running in spite of the pandemic.

We look forward to a bright future for our residents, their families, and our community.



**575.226.5307**

Schedule a Tour of our Facility or Call for Information on Room Availability.

2013 W, 18th St. Portales, NM 88130  
[goodlifeseniorliving.com](http://goodlifeseniorliving.com)

Find Us on Facebook - Good Life Senior Living Portales

## SAFELY SHOP FOR GROCERIES WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING

As recently as a few months ago, grocery shopping was an uneventful chore that few people were likely to remember after returning home. But in the wake of efforts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, grocery shopping changed in ways that few people will ever forget.

Social distancing guidelines and recommendations urged consumers to stay in their homes as much as possible, but grocery shopping requires people to spend time outside their homes. A few simple strategies can help shoppers stay safe as they shop for groceries.

### ■ Wear a mask.

Safety guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are evolving as scientists learn more about COVID-19. One of the more significant changes the CDC made to its initial guidelines was to recommend people wear cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. As communities begin to reopen, certain restrictions may be relaxed, but the CDC continues to advise people to wear masks while out in public, including when shopping for groceries. The CDC notes



that wearing masks may slow the spread of the virus by preventing people who have it but are asymptomatic from transmitting it to others.

### ■ Shop during off-peak hours.

Traditionally "off-peak" hours may no longer apply at many grocery stores, the majority of which have changed their store hours so staff can thoroughly clean and disinfect stores each night. But even if stores are not open as late as they used to be, there's still times

of day when fewer customers will likely be in the store. Early mornings may be designated for shoppers in vulnerable populations, such as the elderly. However, many stores remain less crowded in the mornings than they are during the rest of the day. Avoid shopping on weekends if you want to steer clear of crowds, as these are the only times when people who are still working can find time to shop. Weekday mornings or late afternoons may be ideal times

to shop for shoppers who want to avoid crowds.

### ■ Wash hands before and after going to the store.

The CDC continues to tout the importance of washing hands as a means to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Scientists are still unsure about how easily the virus can spread from contact with potentially contaminated surfaces, but washing hands before and after shopping is a simple safety measure that prevents the spread of germs and potentially

harmful viruses like COVID-19.

### ■ Avoid touching your face.

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology note that respiratory infections can be caused by an assortment of bacteria, viruses and other disease-causing germs. Scientists believe COVID-19 is spread through the respiratory droplets of infected persons. These droplets are essentially invisible, but when people come into contact with them and

then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, viruses can spread. So people should avoid touching their face with potentially dirty hands.

Grocery shopping has changed as the world reacts to the COVID-19 virus. As communities begin to reopen, it's important that people remain diligent when shopping for groceries, taking every step necessary to protect themselves and others from contracting this potentially deadly virus.

**BeeHive**  
HOMES

**Thank You**  
to the Essential Workers  
that Helped Keep Our  
Residents Safe and  
Our Communities  
Running!

Clovis  
2305 N. Norris St.  
(575) 366-5003

Portales  
1420 S. Main Ave.  
(575) 356-0466

We are forever grateful to all essential workers throughout our community!

**YUCCA**  
TELECOM  
70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

We're here for you.  
(575) 226 - 2255 | [yuccatelecom.com](http://yuccatelecom.com)

**Thank you**  
ESSENTIAL WORKERS

FROM ALL OF US AT INTERIM HEALTHCARE!  
WE ARE PROUD TO WORK ALONGSIDE YOU!

**Interim**  
HEALTH CARE®

HOME CARE AND HOSPICE

EXCELLENT CARE. EVERY PATIENT. EVERY DAY.



## HOW TO ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY CAR PARADE

Celebrations took a backseat as the world responded to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. Stay-at-home measures to prevent the spread of the deadly virus forced religious organizations to close their facilities while graduation season came and went with many communities unable to honor the hardworking students who earned their diplomas and degrees. But while large scale celebrations may not have taken place, communities still had various reasons to celebrate, and many found creative ways to do so.

Car parades are one way communities worked around social distancing so residents

could celebrate together without getting sick. Car parades can be relatively simple to plan, but it's still important that organizers take certain steps to make sure everyone stays safe and adheres to local guidelines.

**Contact local government officials.** City councils and police departments can be great resources for car parade organizers. Speak with officials prior to spreading the word about the parade to confirm that such gatherings are allowed and if there are any restrictions that participants must follow. Incorporate any restrictions into the planning of the event.

**Let participants know they must stay in their vehicles.** The point of a car parade is to celebrate as a community without increasing anyone's risk of getting or spreading the COVID-19 virus. As a result, it's imperative that all participants remain in their vehicles for the duration of the parade and that no objects are passed between cars while the parade is taking place.

**Keep disturbances to a minimum.** Car parades can be boisterous, but it's important that participants remember that some of their neighbors may be recovering from the COVID-19 virus. As a result, try to keep distur-

bances like honking or blaring music to a minimum when driving through residential areas. If possible, limit parade routes to commercial districts so no one in recovery is disturbed during the parade.

**Encourage participants to dress up their vehicles.** The fun can start before the parade by encouraging participants to write messages of support on their rear passenger windows where drivers' vision won't be compromised. Messages of support also can be attached to the tops of vehicles and participants can play upbeat music to lift their own spirits and the

spirits of others, including spectators.

**Encourage spectators to keep their distance.** Parades would not be the same without spectators, but it's important that spectators avoid gathering during the parade. Doing so can compromise social distancing efforts. Encourage all spectators to wear masks and stay at least six feet apart during the festivities.

Community car parades can be great ways to gather with friends and neighbors while adhering to social distancing measures. Organizers must take several factors into consideration when planning such events.

To the Healthcare Teams and Frontline Workers Looking Out for this Community, We Appreciate You and All That You Do

Thank You!

Health Care Workers  
Law Enforcement  
Grocery Workers  
Delivery Workers  
Restaurants  
Retailers

THE CITIZENS BANK OF CLOVIS FDIC

421 Pile Street • 575-769-1911 • [www.cbcnm.bank](http://www.cbcnm.bank)

**LA CASA**  
FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

Thank You to Our Employees and Community!

Providing Safe Quality Care

- Dental • Pediatrics • Womens Health • Family/Internal Medicine

1521 W 13th St,  
Clovis, NM 88101  
575.769.0888

Telehealth Visits Available

1515 W First St,  
Portales, NM 88130  
575.356.6695

Community HomeCare

Nursing  
Physical Therapy  
Occupational Therapy  
Housekeeping  
Personal Care  
ADLs

Curry ★  
Roosevelt ★  
Quay ★  
Guadalupe  
De Baca ★  
Lincoln  
Chaves  
Otero  
Eddy

\* Skilled Services

Clovis (575) 769-2243 Main (800) 559-2243 Toll-Free (575) 762-6452 Fax (575) 762-0851 Nursing Fax info@chomecare.biz

Roswell (575) 623-6614 Main (800) 455-6614 Toll-Free (575) 625-3953 Fax (575) 258-7987 Fax info@chomecare.biz

Ruidoso (575) 258-1986 Main (866) 258-1986 Toll-Free (575) 258-7987 Fax info@chomecare.biz

Tucumcari (575) 575-461-3661 Main (866) 661-3661 Toll-Free (575) 799-0789 Fax info@chomecare.biz

[chomecare.com](http://chomecare.com)

COMMITTED TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR PATIENTS, OUR HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND OUR COMMUNITY.

# READY TO FLY? BE READY FOR NEW RULES

**By Catharine Hamm**  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

A hundred years ago when you took your last flight — or was it just a year that seemed longer? — flying was different. Now that we've endured isolation, more than 80% of us say we want to go somewhere in the next six months, a new survey shows.

If you're going by plane, you'll need to forget some of what you know about air travel and embrace the new rules, regulations and requirements. Here, fliers, is what to expect for your next vacation as you navigate Air Travel 2.0, the COVID-19 edition.

You'll have company at 35,000 feet this summer

To no one's surprise, load factors — that is, how full planes are — dropped to 59% in the first 11 months of 2020, down from about 85% in 2019, Bureau of Transportation Statistics say. That means in a 143-seat 737, you would have had about 123 seats filled in 2019 and about 84 in 2020.

"Great!" you say. "Social distancing. Empty middle seats. I get to stretch my legs."

Dream on. Most airlines no longer keep the middle seat empty. (Delta will retain that space only through the end of April.) COVID-19 and all it implies means airlines are burning cash. To slow the burn, they have cut routes and capacity to increase load factors. The equation is simple: more people, more dough.

Pent-up demand and the possibility of herd immunity by summer means more of us hope to hit the road, according to a Longwoods International survey released Feb. 9.

This survey of traveler sentiment, its 30th in the COVID-19 era, showed that 81% of respondents plan to travel in the next six

months, up from 65% in mid-January.

The car trip is still king, said Amir Eylon, president and chief executive of Longwoods.

"Airline travel will rebound at a pace that will depend on the pace of vaccination, which means that it will rebound at a slower pace than auto travel," he said in an email.

"One would expect airline travel to increase significantly in the third and fourth quarters, barring any unforeseen new challenges to travel." That might suggest ...

## Buy now, save for later?

If you are thinking summer or fall for travel, consider booking by the end of March for better fares, said Scott Keyes, founder of Scott's Cheap Flights, which chases flight deals.

Unlike pre-COVID days when the fee to change a fare often wiped out the value of your ticket, today's kinder, gentler airlines have dropped the punitive fee on most flights.

By booking now, Keyes said, you lock in the fare and don't have to worry about taking the financial hit.

Here's what you do have to worry about, he said: If the cost of your rebooked flight is more than what you originally paid, you must make up the difference.

If the price has dropped? Well, that depends on the airline. United, for instance, will make you pay the difference if your new fare costs more, but if it costs less, you don't get a refund. Heads, United wins. Tails, United wins.

It's critical, then, to check the airline's policies on rebooking. Yes, we know fine print is not fun print, but it's critical to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Using Google Flights, I checked fares for the back half of the year. These fares might no

longer be available, because corralling a fare is like trying to herd cats, but here's what you would have paid Feb. 10 for a round-trip flight from LAX to:

Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, July 14-21: \$233 nonstop on Delta, for summer fun in the south-of-the-border sun.

San Francisco, Sept. 3-6, \$111 round trip on Delta and United, for Labor Day weekend.

Boston, Sept. 29-Oct. 6, \$251 on Delta and American, if you want to do a bit of leaf peeping.

Maui, Hawaii, Dec. 16-27, \$398 on American. Prices usually shoot up for Hawaii at year-end, but these December dates yielded that sub-\$400 fare. If you go on, say, Dec. 20 and return Dec. 27, you'll pay at least \$145 more (on Alaska). But even a \$543 fare Christmas week is a bargain.

What if you decide to brave it and leave the country?

Here's a new twist that may surprise air travelers.

Insurance abroad sometimes isn't optional.

This isn't the old saw about not being covered by Medicare when you travel abroad. (Generally you are not.) Before COVID-19, a handful of countries required travelers to have insurance that covered them at the destination, no matter their age or whether they had insurance at home. Now the list of such destinations is growing.

Now, some countries are requesting proof that you're covered before they let you in.

Costa Rica, for instance, which is admitting U.S. visitors, now requires proof of insurance uploaded to its Health Pass, which is not available until 48 hours before your flight. You must have a Health Pass for each member of your party. If your health insurance doesn't meet the requirements, Costa Rica will be in touch.

Finding out that your insurance doesn't measure up isn't some-



## Mind your mask and manners

Airlines began dribbling out requirements for wearing masks on flights as last summer began. Each carrier set the rules, so they differed.

Not anymore. President Joe Biden signed an executive order last month that mandates masks on planes (as well as trains, buses, ships and public transportation). You'll need to mask up in airports (along with train stations, bus, ship and ferry terminals).

Passengers who don't comply will face greater penalties than landing on the carrier's no-fly list. The Transportation Security Administration announced fines for mask miscreants starting at \$250 — and topping out at \$1,500. And — surprise! — if you're a super jerk ("aggravating" or "mitigating" factors in government speak), "TSA may seek a sanction amount that falls outside these ranges," it said in a news release.

The carriers will report the violators to the TSA.

These new mandates are in effect until May 11, but don't be surprised if they're extended, which would be good news for summer fliers who will be able to breathe a little easier, figuratively speaking.

## Thank You to "OUR" Essential Workers

### The Teachers and Staff at Portales Municipal Schools.

Our teachers have worked tirelessly to provide **essential** education to students: online and now in the classroom.

Our Support Staff have helped to open our schools and keep everyone safe. Education is an **essential** service to keep our community successful. Today's students are tomorrow's future.

**Portales Municipal School District**



Roosevelt County  
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The power of human connections®

**To Our Members, Employees and Our Community Thank You for Your Constant Support**

**Providing Safe, Reliable and Affordable Electrical Service to the Members We Serve.**

**575-356-4491**

121 N Main Ave, Portales NM

## Faith, Family & Friends

During these trying times, we are reminded daily of what is most important. From our Family at Buena Vista Realty, a **BIG THANK YOU** to those who are working so hard to keep us all going strong.

**Buena Vista Realty**

*Your connection to Portales & the surrounding area*

**521 West 2nd Street**

Portales, NM 88130

Office: 575-226-0671

Fax: 575-226-0672

**MLS**  
REALTOR

Koletta Hays  
575-760-1929

Eldon Merrick  
575-607-6242

Kerida Merrick  
575-760-5760

[www.buenavista-nm.com](http://www.buenavista-nm.com)

## MOUTHWASH CONSIDERED FOR COVID-FIGHTING TOOLBOX

**By Zachery Eanes**  
RALEIGH NEWS & OBSERVER

**C**an mouthwash help limit someone's chances of spreading COVID-19 to others? UNC-Chapel Hill's Adams School of Dentistry is launching a clinical trial this month to find out.

So far, laboratory tests have shown commercially available mouthwashes can kill the virus that causes COVID-19. And although there is no clinical evidence that mouthwash can prevent the transmission of the virus, both the American Dental Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recommended the use of mouthwashes before oral procedures.

UNC hopes its study can reveal that evidence, along with which types of mouthwashes are most effective.

"What we don't know is how well this works in practice," said Dr. Jennifer Webster-Cyriaque, a professor at UNC's dental school and in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the School of Medicine.

"Doing this (study) will allow us to determine the efficacy," she added, "and say, 'OK, in this more rigorous study, here's what we have found that works well.'"

If the trials are positive, mouthwash could become another "tool in the arsenal" for fighting COVID-19, Webster-Cyriaque said in a telephone interview.

"We are becoming much more diligent as a society, but there are times in restaurant settings or other social settings where people may go without a mask," she said. "This might just help fill the gaps."

COVID-19 can easily spread when someone infected coughs, sings, talks or sneezes within close contact of someone. But if their viral load in their mouth is reduced, then it may be possi-

ble to reduce transmission. However, COVID-19 also can spread from the nose.

"The mouth will not provide the complete picture, but (mouthwash) may get to the back of the throat, which is shared with the nose," Webster-Cyriaque said.

UNC hopes to enroll people in the trial that have tested positive for COVID-19 within seven days of participating. The school is still actively recruiting people for the trial.

The plan is to measure how much of the virus is in a participant's saliva before and after using mouthwash.

Researchers would then collect and test their saliva every 15 minutes for up to an hour, measuring how long a reduction in their viral load or infectivity lasts.

The trial will include a variety of types of mouthwashes, including ones with antiseptic ingredients like cetylpyridinium chloride or ethanol, such as Listerine and Crest Pro-Health Mouthwash, UNC said.

Dr. Laura Jacox, an orthodontist and oral health sciences researcher, said they hope to identify which mouthwash hits the "sweet spot" between being most effective against the virus and being tolerated by the body.

Jacox added that using mouthwash could also potentially limit the spread of other viruses, like the common cold and influenza, so there could be long-range benefits from the study.

Researchers hope to collect all of their samples for the trial by May, which might allow them to publish results in June or July, Jacox said.

But in the meantime, Jacox said she is already using mouthwash herself and having her patients rinse before she sees them at a private practice where she works.

"We decided to have everyone rinse with mouthwash" when these lab studies started being published, she said in a telephone interview. "I hope this becomes standard of care to reduce other viral loads."

## Science Matters

# Cooling vest eases COVID nurses' stress

*The tightly closed protective clothing that COVID care workers have to wear can get as hot as 97°F (36°C) after a few hours. A Dutch medical center found relief in cooling vests.*

43°F (6°C)



- 1 Vest is put in refrigerated cabinet, cooled for reuse

Vest has polyurethane shell and pockets filled with cooling material

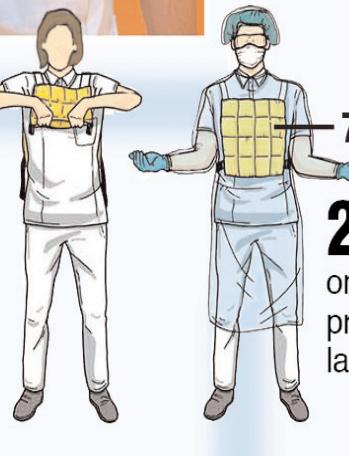


- 5 Vest disinfected with alcohol spray



- 4 Worker removes vest, discards disposable protective equipment

70°F (21°C)



- 2 Worker puts on vest and protective layers



Cools for up to 3 hours

- 3 Person can work with less discomfort and stress

Use of vest improves patient care, reduces mistakes

Source: Thijs Eijsvogels of Radboud University Medical Center (Nijmegen, Netherlands); Temperature journal  
Graphic: Hélen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

© 2021 TNS

**James Polk Stone  
Community Bank**

**THANKS YOU**  
for Helping All of Us  
Get Through This

**Clovis, NM**  
575.742.1000  
901 Colonial Parkway

**Portales, NM**  
575.356.6601  
109 East 2nd Street

Member FDIC EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

[www.jpstonecb.com](http://www.jpstonecb.com)

**C&S**  
Since 1937

**THANK YOU  
TO OUR HEROES!**

EMERGENCY, DOCTORS, VOLUNTEERS, & EDUCATORS



THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE GOING  
THE EXTRA MILE TO HELP AND PROTECT  
OUR COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY!

FUELS • PARTS • TIRES  
**575.356.4495**  
300 W 1st ST, PORTALES

# A stronger community starts with better health.



Whether you need primary care, specialty medical services, cancer care, or hospital care, Plains Regional Medical Center offers a wide range of comprehensive medical services to provide you and your family with the care you need.

**Hospital Services:**

- 24-hour Emergency Room
- Cancer Care
- Hospital Units: Intensive Care, Medical, Pediatrics, Surgical and Women's
- Home Healthcare and Hospice
- Healthplex/Rehabilitation Center
- Labor and Delivery
- Newborn Nursery
- Sleep Medicine

For hospital services, call **(575) 769-2141**.

We've taken extra steps to make care safer.  
Visit [phs.org/covid-19](http://phs.org/covid-19) for more information.

**Primary Care and Specialty Services:**

- Heart and Vascular Care/Cardiovascular Lab
- Gastroenterology
- General Surgery
- Medical Oncology/Hematology
- Nephrology
- Orthopedic Care
- Podiatry
- Pulmonary and Cardiopulmonary Medicine
- Radiation Oncology
- Urology
- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Dermatology (coming early 2021)
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (coming early 2021)

To schedule an appointment with one of our primary care or specialty care services, call **(575) 769-7577**.



**Plains Regional Medical Center**

[www.phs.org/clovis](http://www.phs.org/clovis)

Presbyterian Medical Group is a department  
of Plains Regional Medical Center.

**Plains Regional Medical Center Cancer Center**

2219 Dillon Street, Clovis, NM 88101

**(575) 769-7365**

**Same Day Care Clinic**

Open Monday-Friday, 8 am to 8 pm

**(575) 769-7577**