



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
Governor

DAVID R. SCRASE, M.D.
Acting Cabinet Secretary

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**Critical enhancement to Harm Reduction Act heads to
Governor's desk**

HB52 increases distribution of life-saving drug testing devices

SANTA FE - The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) cheered the progress of [House Bill 52](#), which passed the legislature late last night and now heads to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's desk for signature. The bill modernizes the state's Harm Reduction Act to better serve communities and improve the health of New Mexicans by allowing NMDOH and organizations across the state to begin distribution of life-saving drug testing devices, like fentanyl test strips. The bill is sponsored by Representatives Tara L. Lujan, Dayan Hochman-Vigil, and Christine Chandler, and Senators Katy Duhigg and Linda Lopez.

"We fully embrace having the ability to intervene as new public health emergencies occur, to save lives and get people into evidence-based treatment programs," said Acting NMDOH Cabinet Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D. "The enhanced capacity to offer critical services will make a groundbreaking difference in the lives of New Mexicans who participate in and rely on these programs."

"HB52 makes changes to the Harm Reduction Act that will make crucial drug testing supplies available statewide to detect the presence of deadly fentanyl in other illegal and prescription drugs," said Representative Tara Lujan. "Fentanyl overdose is the leading cause of death in New Mexicans ages 18-35 and around the nation. With these changes, we can take a significant step towards preventing many of these unnecessary deaths."

Currently, powerful and deadly synthetic opioids are driving a new wave of overdoses in the state, and the department needs flexibility to move forward in developing effective harm reduction interventions.

"This responsive legislation offers increasingly proactive solutions for an evolving problem, and creates new possibilities for a path forward," said Program Director Aryan Showers. "We are extremely gratified that our team's hard work has made this critical update to current policy possible."

For more information on how the Harm Reduction Program works to reduce substance-related harm while enhancing individual, family, and community wellness, please visit nmhealth.org. To learn more about HB 52 or other inquiries related to the Harm Reduction Program, please contact Program Director Aryan Showers: aryan.showers@state.nm.us.

NMDOH

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The Department of Health works to promote health and wellness, improve health outcomes, and deliver services to all New Mexicans. As New Mexico's largest state agency, DOH offers public health services in all 33 counties and collaborates with 23 Native American tribes, Pueblos and nations.