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## **Albertsons pledges to regularly test all employees through new agreement with state**

Yesterday, the New Mexico Departments of Health and Environment announced a new initiative that offers greater public health protections to employees and customers of essential businesses while avoiding closure requirements. The agreement requires proactive COVID-19 regular testing and contact tracing of essential workers.

Today, Albertsons is adopting this program to increase protections for their employees at all 34 New Mexico locations. All New Mexico Albertsons locations are now open for business.

“We are pleased to reach this agreement with the state that allows us to welcome customers and associates back to our stores just in time for Thanksgiving,” said Jerry Noland, Albertsons’ Group Vice President, Food Safety, Quality Assurance & Occupational Safety.

“Albertsons is leading by example in the communities they serve to keep COVID-19 out of its workforce and out of its stores,” said Environment Department Secretary James Kenney. “We all – state and local government, businesses and citizens – need to stand together to fight this virus.”

“We know that by increasing COVID-19 testing, we improve public health outcomes,” said Department of Health Acting Secretary Billy Jimenez. “We are looking forward to working with Albertsons and other essential businesses who wish to participate in the program.”

The [voluntary agreement](#) is available to essential businesses subject to the 14-day closure requirement in the current public health order and requires them to conduct regular COVID-19 testing among staff, as well as assist the Department of Health in contact tracing efforts. If positive cases are discovered as a result of this testing, the resulting rapid response will not count toward the mandatory 14-day closure requirement in the current public health order.

To participate in the program, a business must submit to both departments a plan that details surveillance testing and contact tracing efforts the establishment will undertake at a business location. A plan must be submitted for each business location.

The agreements not only allow essential businesses to avoid a 14-day mandatory closure, it also clears a path for businesses currently closed to be allowed to reopen before the 14-day period is over. Multiple businesses across the state have expressed their intent to join Albertsons in participating.

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