

Eileen Barrett

I am writing to request that NMED urgently support protecting individuals from heat-related injury and illnesses. As a physician in New Mexico for almost 20 years, and having worked in Shiprock, Gallup, and Albuquerque, I have seen how heat-related illnesses affect individuals through physical illness, hospitalizations, and missed work. Although I could speak about many, many experiences here, the most prominent was one of a dad who was a construction worker who developed dehydration so severe on a hot day that he passed out/was unconscious and needed to be rushed to the hospital. In the hospital I treated him for such severe kidney injury due to heat related dehydration that he needed gallons of IV fluids and electrolytes to restore his kidney function over his multiple day admission. The scientific medical literature shows he is at risk for needing dialysis for the rest of his life.

It is not just construction workers who could benefit from this rule. For example, as a neighbor, I have offered cold water and shade to mail carriers affected by heat.

Foremost, let's be great neighbors - and let's also be good stewards of healthcare and healthcare dollars, and our workforce retention, by passing this.