

## **Why We've Suspended Sales, *Again***

The Friends board has voted to suspend in-person sales until further notice, beginning Friday, November 13. The good news is that an effective Covid19 vaccine is on the horizon, albeit at least two months away from approval and with challenges regarding its distribution. The bad news is that the pandemic will worsen this fall and winter.

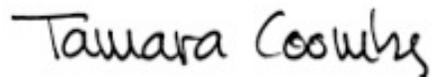
It took more than three months for the country to go from no cases to 1 million in late April. We've gone up 1 million nationwide in the last 10 days, reaching 10 million confirmed cases yesterday. The fear among public health experts is that we are headed into "an unmitigated pandemic" in the months ahead. Here in New Mexico we are now above 1,200 new cases per day for three days in a row, and have hit new records for seven day averages on new cases (1,093) and deaths (13.4).

Beyond the surge itself, a critical concern is hospital capacity, as Covid hospitalizations increase and the flu season begins. Here in New Mexico, Presbyterian Hospital will shortly be postponing elective surgeries requiring overnight stays and will soon postpone elective surgeries generally. (FYI, in the world of hospitals—"elective" means simply that the surgery can be scheduled in advance rather than performed immediately. Heart and cancer surgeries are considered elective when it comes to scheduling.)

The Friends organization is not an essential business, nor do we have to depend on this year's book sales to fulfill our mission to support the Library. I appreciate more than I can say the dedication of Coordinator Melissa Carlisle and the volunteers, but both volunteers and customers come largely from the demographic most likely to be adversely affected by Covid19.

We feel strongly that we should do our part now to reduce unessential activity in our community. We are not in an economic bind, unlike so many of Albuquerque's struggling businesses. We are doing this because we *can*.

Hold Fast,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tamara Coombs". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

President, Friends of the Public Library