



El Diario Sin Nombre

The Newsletter Without a Name

New Mexico Human Services Department

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CSED Sponsors Fatherhood Meeting

The Human Services Department's Child Support Enforcement Division sponsored its semi-annual Fatherhood Initiative Partnership Meeting in Albuquerque on April 29. "I was pleased with the turnout and the different organizations that participated – even a few non-custodial parents attended," said Stephanie Gonzales, Child Support Enforcement Division Director.

Gonzales is one of several who spoke at last month's event. Others included Deputy Secretary Liz Stefanics, Charles E. Stuart of the National Incarcerated Fathers Program, Robert Pacheco of the Bernalillo County Juvenile Detention Center and Family Law Judge Nan Nash of the Second Judicial District Court. "When I see young parents in front of me, which isn't unusual, they are here to tell me what their wants are," said Nash. "Unfortunately, their wants are not always in the best interests of their children, so I come down against them [parents] every time." She said a big challenge today for family law judges involves extended family cases with grandparents or siblings seeking the guardianship of children. "These cases are very difficult because kids still love their parents, even if they are abused by them," she said.

Stuart, who now has Incarcerated Fathers Programs in 33 states, including New Mexico, said, "Do we expect kids who grow up in environments of alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence and generational incarceration to be like us? The answer is yes!" He told the group of a conversation he recently had with an eight-year old boy from a generationally-incarcerated family. "The boy told me, 'I can't wait until I grow up, so I can go to prison!' Every time I think about what he said to me I get blown away," said Stuart. "How do you rehabilitate someone who has never been rehabilitated?"

Stuart offered some New Mexico prison statistics: There are about 6,000 people in prison and three times that number out on parole who owe millions of dollars in child support. He defended them,

saying, "They should send what they can while in prison, even if it is only \$5 per week, but there is no reason someone coming out of prison should owe \$50,000 in child support." He also congratulated the Child Support Enforcement Division and the Corrections Department for working closely with those who are incarcerated to get timely help in modifying their child support court orders.



CSED's Bernie Ortiz (left), Denise Pimparatana, Jackie Baca, Nellie Dee worked hard to make the Fatherhood conference successful.

Gonzales highlighted legislation signed by Governor Richardson earlier this year that allows the Child Support Enforcement Division to make it easier for non-custodial parents to get on a payment plan and lower the interest rate they are currently paying for past due child support. "Our goal is to make it easier for non-custodial parents, most of whom are fathers, to become more a part of their children's lives, both emotionally and financially," said Gonzales. "Some of this legislation is intended to help us to do that." When both parents are supporting their children financially, it not only benefits the child, but also taxpayers because there is less demand for other social programs like Medicaid, food assistance, childcare and financial assistance.

There are 62,000 parents, most of them custodial parents, using child support enforcement services to locate absent parents, establish paternity and enforce court orders. The division has an arsenal of enforcement tools at its disposal to enforce tough child support cases, such as suspending drivers', hunting and fishing, and professional licenses; income tax intercept authority; publishing the 25-Most-Wanted list of child support obligors in New Mexico; and national new-hire and employee databases .

Last year, child support enforcement collections in New Mexico were \$72 million, up by 12.6 percent from the previous year. The division anticipates collecting \$78 million this year, and the fatherhood initiative, with 190 members and growing, will play an important role in reaching out to many non-custodial parents by letting them know that when it comes to their children, they have both rights and responsibilities.

Department's Association of Professional Manager's Conference Successful

By Michael T Brochu, Roswell

I wanted to provide the department a synopsis of the Association of Professional Manager's (APM) Conference that took place here May 5-7. First of all, it was a huge success, which included three days of trainings for ISD and CSED Managers -- highlighted by Bernadette Trujillo-Vaduro's *You Can Make a Difference, the Leadership Perspective*.

On the first day of the conference, Roswell Mayor Bill Owen made a stunning announcement, proclaiming it as *Human Services Department Day* in Roswell. He could have just as easily proclaimed it the *Day the Aliens Returned!*

On a more serious note, Sonya Montoya of the Southwest Albuquerque ISD office was chosen as the new APM President. Anthony Demarnello of Albuquerque's Region VII child support enforcement office was named the new Treasurer. Finally, Aldo Jadrnicek of Albuquerque's Southeast ISD office was elected Secretary by all the membership. Looks like a clean sweep for A-town.

The second day's meeting was held at Eastern New Mexico University. The training highlight was a joint training on claims and claim processing by the Office of Inspector General and the ISD training section. Corinne Jameson also certified all Line Managers on the new Employee Development Plan. Later that evening, a dinner was held and presentations to outgoing APM members were awarded. Also, token ROM representative at the meeting Linda Myers received a *Sword in the Stone* CD from me, since she became the boards "Merlin" for her advice, counsel, assistance and uncanny ability to make problems disappear like magic.

Dave Baumann gave a talk on the Roswell spacecraft incident. He has worked as a promotional specialist for several companies, including for Universal Studios where he designed the *Halloween Fright-Nights*. It seemed only natural (human) that after the banquet about 30 of us went to Baumann's *Alien Encounter, a Journey Through an Alien Laboratory*. In the laboratory humans are the unwitting test subjects of aliens. While it was not as elaborate as Universal Studios, it was great and we all screamed so loud we had trouble talking the next day.

It has become a tradition to close the conference with Human Resource's Cheryl Thompson. And she came through again with a rendition of *Take This Job and Love It*. We also gave away over 50 prizes, including several signed artistic prints, a guitar, and a Home Theatre System. Overall, 146 managers attended, and I am already looking forward to next year's conference.

Who Are New Mexico's Uninsured? HSD Intends to Find Out

Studies show that New Mexico ranks second-to-last in the country for the percentage of people without health care, with about 400,000 uninsured – but are these numbers really accurate? With the help of a federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Governor's office, together with the Human Services Department will put a new magnifying glass on the issue of the uninsured and answer some tough questions that will move forward in reaching Governor Richardson's goal of providing affordable health insurance to all New Mexicans.

Initial results of the \$905,000, two-year HRSA grant are expected to be available in August 2005. Sharon Stevenson is busily coordinating the effort for the department. She said that so far there are four different components to the uninsured study. They are:

- A statewide household survey to determine the specific demographics of the uninsured;
- Health insurance databases analysis;
- A state employee health insurance survey; and
- An actuarial analysis for the different policy initiatives recommended.

"Even when looking at the demographics of state employees, one interesting phenomenon pops up, and that's the large number who do not opt for the fairly generous employee health insurance offered to them as state employees," said Stevenson. "Is it that upwards of 5,000 state employees are covered by other health plans, or is health insurance becoming unaffordable for them as well?"

"We are really, really trying hard not to re-create the wheel with this new study," said Secretary Pamela Hyde when asked about the uninsured study. "Some people have asked me, 'Why another uninsured study? We already know everything that we need to know.' Well, we don't know everything that we need to know, and there is so much misinformation out there as well," she said.

Medicaid Senior Economist Dan Harris agrees, "We do know that we can rely on administrative data like the number of people insured through Medicaid, but for those outside the system, we really don't have good data to work with." Another conundrum said Harris, "Is that we do not know other very important things like overlaps in health care services for those who have access to Indian Health Services

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or Veteran’s health care. We need firm answers to these questions because Native Americans and Veterans make up a huge percentage of the state’s population.”

Other questions that the study looks to answer are the number of uninsured by age; how large a role do free, or low-cost health clinics play in providing health care; and what is considered to be affordable health insurance for most families in New Mexico?

By answering these and other questions, the department and the state may be soon be in a position to do something quickly to help New Mexico bounce up to near the middle of this bad list.

State Agencies Work to Make Public-funded Transportation Services Transparent

Legislation (HB 412) signed into law in 2003 by Governor Richardson has the Human Services Department taking the lead in finding better ways to share resources devoted to health and human services-related public transportation through a pilot project or by other means. The Intrastate Human Services Transportation Coordinating Committee (IHSTCC), comprised of several state agencies including the Department of Transportation (DOT), has been meeting since August 2003 to do this, and on May 4 looked to Valencia County to take the lead in this effort.

“What we have learned is that transportation services for the elderly, disabled and low-income families are often confusing and not cost effective, and it shouldn’t have to be this way,” said Liz Stefanics, Deputy Secretary for the Human Services Department and member of the IHSTCC. “One option is for state agencies to work with one transportation provider that serves all of its clients.”

At the two-hour meeting in Valencia County, about 30 elected officials, transportation providers and municipal leaders heard Stefanics and DOT Director Ricardo Campos outline the status of state/federal-funded transportation programs in Valencia County. “Those of us sitting in Santa Fe can’t tell you how to set up the best transportation program, but we want to partner with you in doing this,” said Stefanics. She also pointed out that initiatives like this (transportation brokerage programs) have been done successfully in other states, and they dramatically

improve the quality of “appropriate” transportation services to clients at less cost to taxpayers.



Deputy Secretary Liz Stefanics answers transportation pilot project questions in Los Lunas on May 4.

One observer at the meeting asked why Valencia County was picked as a pilot county. Stefanics answered, “Valencia County has rural, urban and Native American populations, and many state transportation resources

are already being used here.” According to statistics gathered by the Medical Assistance Division, state agencies provide \$2,000,000 in transportation-related funding for health and human services needs to 16,000 people each year in the county. Many attendees were interested in the idea because it would

-HSD Awards and More-



Thanks to those of you who donated reading glasses to Guatemalan kids last year. Deputy Secretary Liz Stefanics received photos showing the results the glasses are getting there.

MAD employee Benita Gallegos (center) receives an award from Health employees Diane DaCamana (left) and Jayne Bukowski for her work in making the Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Program a success. Three hundred women have benefited from the two-year-old program.



HSD Bowl for Kids’ Sake participants Barbara Gay (left), Julia Morey DiRuggiero, Vivian Herrera, Dimitry Nukhman, Conny Maki and Andrea Maril of Big Brothers, Big Sisters display the First Lady’s Trophy awarded to HSD by Barbara Richardson.

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give the county the opportunity to expand services into outlying but growing areas outside the Los Lunas-Belen Rio Grande corridor. State Representative Kandy Cordova said, "This would really enhance my area and get people in different walks of life involved."

State Senator Michael Sanchez said, "Conceptually, it's a good idea. Whether or not you can get three municipalities (Belen, Bosque Farms and Los Lunas) and a sovereign nation (Isleta Pueblo) to go along is another thing."

Valencia County Income Support Division County Director Lou Cimalore said, "Right now, the transportation situation with his clients is good, but if we get everybody working together it will be even better." One improvement he would like to see is night trips added for TANF clients because that would open doors for more work opportunities at businesses that stay open into the evening and night.

The state asked to hear back from Valencia County officials by June about whether or not they want to accept the transportation pilot program. "We would like Valencia County to serve as a health and human services transportation model for other counties in the state," said Stefanics

Many Human Services Department employees demonstrate their goodwill in the 2004 Cystic Fibrosis Great Strides charitable campaign again this year.



Ruth Cristo wins dinner with Jerry Patton, the ISD county director for the NE Albuquerque office. Overall, the NE ISD office collected \$227.

Great Strides participant, Anthony Castor of ISD's central office raised \$631, the most in the department by one person. "I'd like to thank everyone for their support and help," said



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