



El Diario Sin Nombre

The Newsletter Without a Name

New Mexico Human Services Department

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Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|---|
| ISD Region II's Wheels to Work | 2 |
| Medicaid School-based Medicaid Services | 3 |
| CSED's "25 Most Wanted" Changes | 3 |

HSD Forges Ahead With BH Collaborative

The ink was barely dry on the bill signed by the governor creating the Interdepartmental Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (IBHPC) when the first meeting seeking Native American leadership's input was held on

Mar. 4. At the meeting in Albuquerque, the Navajo Nation, pueblos and Apache tribes were updated by the Human Services Department and the departments of Health; Children, Youth and Families; Aging and Long-term Services, Public Education and Corrections on how behavioral health (mental and substance abuse) services are directed bringing to light the confusion and waste that too many well-intentioned bureaucracies can cause.

Illustrating the need for change best was a chart – packed full of lines and boxes – depicting who does what for whom based on each agencies' funding, mission and mandate. "Under the current system, you literally could have a client who has three different case managers or two different psychiatrists without any way for the system to have people talk to each other," said Secretary

Pamela Hyde. "We need to not only look at consolidating purchasing behavioral health services but at restructuring the different advisory groups, all of which have different leadership, direction, issues and goals."

In the packed conference room at the Child Support Enforcement Division's Region VII office, Medical Assistance Division's



Medical Assistance Division's Sharilyn Roanhorse-Aguilar updates Native Americans on Medicaid BH.

Native American liaison, Sharilyn Roanhorse-Aguilar updated tribal members on the different ways just one program – Medicaid – reimburses Indian Health Services for the behavioral health-related services they provide under both fee for service

and SALUD! managed care.

Although a few tribal leaders cautioned against moving too fast on the behavioral health purchasing collaborative, the actual timeline for implementing IBHPC seems reasonable:

July, 2005. So far, a draft concept paper has been released for review and comment. Over the summer, respective departments will request federal approvals; and in the fall, a contract will be released for vendors to bid on with a final selection planned by the end of the year.



State Senator Leonard Tsosie (District 22, D), left, Richard Archuleta of Taos Pueblo and Santa Clara Pueblo Governor Jeff Sisneros listen to presentations by the cabinet secretaries.

At the meeting, state Senator Leonard Tsosie of Crownpoint commended all of the state departments for the meeting, and said, "We tribal people cross boundaries all of the time, and on this issue we should not be territorial."

First Lady Visits TANF/NMWorks Center

"I appreciate what all of you do – You are dedicated caring people," said First Lady Barbara Richardson to about 50 UNM Career Works and state employees gathered to celebrate the opening of the Albuquerque Career Works center on Mar. 18. Also on hand at the new office at 500 Copper NW was State Senator Joseph Carraro (District 23), Career Works Director Vivian LaValley, UNM's Dean of Continuing Education Rita Martinez-Purson and ISD's Region V Manager Linda Myers.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The First Lady also commended employees for their efforts in facilitating economic development in the state: prospective businesses take into consideration the level of skill and education a community's work force can offer them. UNM's

Career Works has helped Albuquerque-area TANF/NMWorks clients prepare for and find work for seven years. Last year, they helped 6,800 TANF clients find part- or full-time jobs, helped another 900 through vocational training and helped 50 receive their high school GEDs. Overall, they served over 10,000 clients last year.

Several Career Works clients also offered testimonials on how Career Works has helped them gain self-esteem, enabling them to find and hold a job. One client said, "Career Works can help anyone willing to apply him- or herself." Another client said, "I didn't think I had barriers until I attended Career Works."

At the ceremony, little magnifying glasses adorned with ribbons were given to guests. In her remarks LaValley said, "The magnifying glasses you have signify how focused on our clients we become when offering them support." With the move to 500 Copper, Career Works staff can focus even better on helping TANF/NMWorks clients because now their training facilities and support staff are in one location.

Wheels Benefits ISD's Region II Clients

Tears came to the eyes of one Torrance County mother of four as she told others how her Wheels to Work (WtoW) Ford minivan dramatically changed the lives of her family. "This year, my two teenage daughters can participate in high school drama classes after school, and my 11-year-old son can play on the basketball team," said Eloise Andre.

Andre and five other WtoW recipients were honored in a ceremony at the Torrance Works Career Center in Moriarty on May 22. ISD's Region II is the only ISD region with WtoW. The region encompasses the semi-rural San Juan, McKinley, Cibola, Valencia and Torrance counties. Since the program began in 1998, it has enabled 32 TANF clients to earn their own set of wheels. Nanette Griffy of Moriarty's



Career Works Director Vivian LaValley, left, shows First Lady Barbara Richardson around their new center.

ISD office said, "It's a good program, which has helped a lot of wage subsidy clients who started out in our ISD office."

Most people take their transportation for granted. And it's not until you hear from people like WtoW participants that you begin to understand how difficult it can be for families without an automobile. Take WtoW participant Diana Ruiz, who said, "My car gives me more freedom to do things like take my child to the emergency room in the middle of the night, which happens a lot. It has made a big difference for my kids, my husband and myself."

When Tori Quintero was chosen for WtoW, Torrance Works staff let her know of her selection by putting a note on her old car saying, "You can throw this old car away."

Before Angel Chavez received her WtoW vehicle, she had to find rides or borrow her dad's truck that didn't have a back window. "I used to freeze driving to work in the morning," she said. Other times, she would have to wait with her children at the day care center, sometimes until eight o'clock at night, for a ride home. Now she enjoys being able to take her children to places like a park.

Not every TANF client is selected for the Wheels to Work program, and not all clients make it through the one-year process enabling them to actually purchase the vehicle for one dollar. To be eligible, clients must have a clean driving record, already be working and not already have their own reliable transportation. Then, after taking possession of the auto, they must maintain employment and a clean driving record for one full year.



WtoW recipients Diane Ruiz, left, Eloise Andre, Barbara Elliott, Torrance Works supervisor, Tori Quintero, and Angel Chavez. Two others were unable to attend the ceremony because of work commitments.

Joe Corrales, Region II ROM said, "Occasionally we have a problem with WtoW. One client decided to leave the state with the vehicle before one year, and we had to track it down. But the program works and it has helped a lot of our clients move off public assistance quickly." Of the six women honored at the Moriarty ceremony, two now own their vehicle, four are no longer receiving TANF and all are employed.

More Children with Disabilities Benefiting from Medicaid School-Based Services

Nearly 2,000 more students are being served by the department's Medicaid School-Based Services (SBS) -- formerly Medicaid in the Schools (MITS) -- than last year. This was done through a concerted effort by Medicaid staff to get more school districts across the state signed up for Medicaid SBS.

Medicaid SBS pays for direct health services such as physical, speech and occupational therapy for disabled children in a school setting. So far this year, \$4.1 million in federal Medicaid dollars have gone to 46 school districts and collaboratives participating in the program. These dollars match \$1.2 million in General Fund dollars spent by schools on these services. "These are important services that allow children with disabilities some of the same opportunities as other children by allowing them to more fully participate in the education process," said Carolyn Ingram, medical assistance division director.

Under the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA), federal law requires schools to provide disabled children the same access to education as other kids. The Medicaid SBS program helps and is now serving 11,427 children.

More schools are now signing up for Medicaid SBS since the program was renamed and the rules in the joint powers agreement between HSD and school districts will soon be changed. The Portales school district has recently joined and Española is awaiting approval of its application.

Under the Johnson Administration, HSD eliminated the administrative claiming option for schools in the MITS Program. This option is being reinstated by the Richardson Administration and will again allow Medicaid to pay for administrative services like outreach and coordination of care. In the meantime, Medicaid is helping schools pay for more direct health care services for children.

"I am delighted that reinstatement of administrative activities will soon be afforded to our school districts," said Department of Education Secretary, Dr. Veronica Garcia.

The department is awaiting approval by the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to reinstate administrative services and hopes to have coverage of administrative activities in place by the fall when the school year resumes.



Learning the Rules

New Albuquerque ISD employees Veronica Esparza, Lorrina Sanchez, Camille Sanchez, Nicole Banks and Tammy Tapia (face hidden) receive food stamp training in the new computer training room at the NE ISD Albuquerque office.

"25 Most Wanted" List for Owing Child Support Changes Focus

Every three months the New Mexico Human Services Department publishes a list of the 25 Most Wanted for owing child support in the state's largest newspaper. Most states' child support enforcement agencies are required to do this by statute and some even circulate poster-size lists with grim-looking photographs of their most wanted.

The Navajo Nation also has gotten tough regarding non-payers of child support. Recently, they distributed a poster that chides delinquent parents, "they didn't ask for a parent like you, but you brought them into this world. Take responsibility..."

Pay your child support, NOW!"

To bring more attention to child support obligors who owe money – and a lot of it – the department has changed the way it reports its 25 Most Wanted list as well. First the

goal was to wipe away the stigma that dads are the only ones who don't pay child support. Until last year, there has never been a woman on the list and women do comprise about 3.5 percent of delinquent parents. Now each list includes one female obligor because it's the department's goal to continue putting children first by encouraging both parents, whether mothers or fathers, to assume responsibility for improving the economic and social well-being of their children.

Another change to the 25 Most Wanted list is it now focuses

(Continued on page 4)



A Navajo Nation child support enforcement poster urges responsibility.

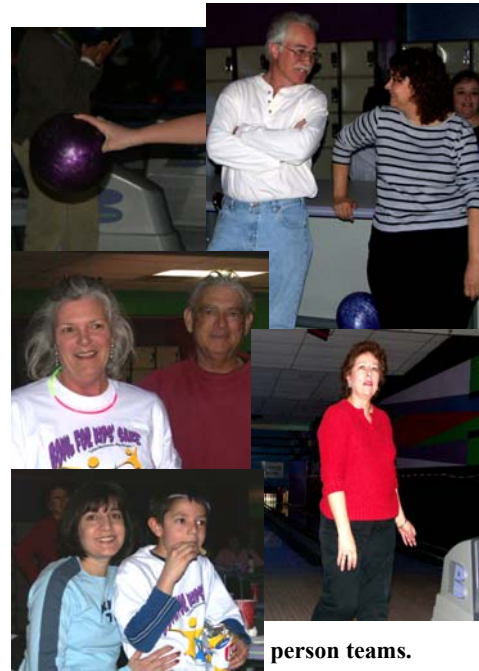
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on a different part of the state each quarter. Last year, the names and last known addresses of non-custodial parents (NCPs) who owed custodial parents child support that lived in the Albuquerque and Farmington/Gallup areas were spotlighted, and with good results. The list concentrating in the Farmington/Gallup area encouraged four persons on it to contact the department about settling their cases (all owed in the high five-figure dollar amount). Also, one anonymous caller provided the address of a fifth person on the list, and the actual residence of a sixth person was discovered and an old bench warrant was reissued for the NCP under the correct address and jurisdiction.

“We know that many of those who make the 25 Most Wanted list will never pay up, but bringing awareness to the fact that there is a list encourage others to keep current on their payments or seek a timely modification to their obligation if they lose their job so that they don’t end up on the list,” said Child Support Enforcement Division Director Stephanie Gonzales.

The 2004 first quarter 25 Most Wanted list for owing child support released last month focuses on parents owing back support and living in the Las Cruces, Deming and Silver City areas. You can view this list from the department’s Website at <http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/pdf/MostWantedMar04.pdf>.

HSD Collects \$5,343, Beating Other State Agencies and Winning the First Lady’s Trophy for Big Brothers, Big Sisters Bowl for Kids’ Sake



Some of the Mar. 14 participants are from top left, Secretary Pamela Hyde’s arm, Mike Ricklin of DoIT, CIO Conny Maki, Legislative Liaison Barbara Gay and her husband Chris, Joanne Brown of DoIT, Claire Romero of OOS and her son Cameron. The department fielded six, six-

person teams.



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