

New Mexico Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative

Collaboration for Recovery, Resiliency and Empowerment



Aging and Long-Term Services Department

Administrative Office of the Courts

Children, Youth and Families Department

New Mexico Corrections Department

Department of Finance and Administration

Department of Health

Department of Workforce Solutions

Department of Transportation

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Governor's Commission on Disability

Governor's Health Policy Advisor

Health Policy Commission

Human Services Department

Indian Affairs Department

Mortgage Finance Authority

Public Education Department

For Immediate Release March 11, 2009

Contact: Betina Gonzales McCracken (505) 476-6205

National Alliance on Mental Illness Sees Progress and Needed Improvements in New Mexico's Mental Health Care Services

SANTA FE – The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has issued its “Grading the States 2009 – A Report on America’s Health Care System for Adults with Serious Mental Illness.” Overall, the nation received a “D”, and New Mexico received a “C”. The NAMI report recognized the progress New Mexico has made since its last report in 2006.

“New Mexico was recognized for its innovations in services for co-occurring disorders, funding mental health services for returning veterans and their families and consumer run services and peer supports,” said Linda Roebuck, Behavioral Health Collaborative CEO.

The report also recognized the state’s urgent needs, for example; closing gaps in services especially in rural regions, providing culturally competent services and providers, providing good data and outcome measurements, and providing unrestricted access to psychiatric medications.

To help address the need for more behavioral health services, the State is planning to build a substance abuse treatment and training facility in Los Lunas and is seeking funding from the New Mexico Legislature to operate a women’s residential treatment center there. The State’s new contractor for behavioral health services, OptumHealth New Mexico, has plans to implement a comprehensive approach to cultural competence, ensure effective consumer and family participation in treatment planning, and invest in housing and supported employment among several of their initiatives.

“New Mexico shares NAMI’s goals of having a mental health system meet the needs of all Americans whenever and wherever they need it. This report helps confirm the areas of improvement that need to be addressed in New Mexico,” said Dr. Alfredo Vigil, Department of Health Secretary and Co-Chair of the Collaborative.

The areas of concern identified in the NAMI report focus on additional resources and the fact that the economic downturn may be placing strains on government budgets, as well as the need for more mental health and substance abuse services.

“This is not the time to cut funding for such important behavioral health services it is the time to expand it. Some rays of hope on the national level include mental health parity that should provide equal benefits for people with insurance, as well as through the expansion of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP),” said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary and Co-Chair of the Collaborative.

The complete “Grading the States 2009” report can be found on the NAMI website at www.nami.org.

About the Collaborative

The Collaborative was created during the 2004 Legislature to allow most state agencies and resources involved in behavioral health treatment and recovery to work as one in an effort to improve mental health and substance abuse services in New Mexico. This cabinet-level group represents 15 agencies and Governor Bill Richardson’s office.

###