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For Immediate Release

The Human Services Department Working Hard to Minimize the Impact of the Federal Government Shutdown on New Mexicans

February SNAP benefits to be issued early

Santa Fe, New Mexico –Today the N.M. Human Services Department announced its decision to participate in a waiver option from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that will provide an early issuance of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for February.

Late last night, the USDA made this option available to states, which will be required to issue the February benefits for approved and ongoing SNAP recipients on or before January 20, 2019. Prior to this announcement, the SNAP program was not funded beyond January 31, 2019 due to the Federal Government shutdown.

“This option will be a big relief to the 455,000 New Mexicans who rely on the benefit to put food on their tables each day,” said Dr. David Scrase, HSD Secretary – Designate. “That equates to roughly 50million dollars that New Mexico families will be able to use at their local grocery store.”

Each month there are approximately 223,000 families who receive SNAP benefits, with an average benefit of \$241. It is important for families to note that the early release of the February benefit in January is not a double payment for January, but is the SNAP benefit for the month of February itself.

“HSD understands the uncertainty caused by the Federal Government shutdown. The wellbeing of New Mexicans remains the focus of the Department,” added Dr. Scrase.

Other federally funded programs administered by the HSD are already funded and currently not impacted by the shutdown.

HSD will continue to work with its federal partners, the Governor’s office, and the Department of Finance and Administration to minimize the impact on clients and their benefits.

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