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HHS Secretaries to “Walk a Mile” in November

Santa Fe, November 4, 2003 – The cabinet secretaries of the four Health and Human Services Departments are signing on to be matched with a low income New Mexican for the month of November to “walk a mile in each other’s shoes.”

The “Walk a Mile” program, sponsored by the New Mexico Association of Community Action Agencies, hopes to build relationships between those who create public policies, and those affected by those policies. “I’m looking forward to seeing first hand how the decisions we make directly effect the way people live their lives,” said Secretary Mary-Dale Bolson of the Children, Youth and Families Department. “I hope it will also be enlightening to the people learning why we make the decisions we do, and how we come to those conclusions.”

“Walk A Mile” promotes a two-way educational street. While the secretaries will spend time with their matches, going to food banks or employment agencies, their matches will also accompany them to policy meetings, learning how state government plays a direct role in the way their lives are shaped. “I think I will learn just as much, if not more from my mate than she will with me,” said Pamela Hyde Secretary of Human Services Department.

The cabinet secretaries will speak weekly with their matches by telephone, as well as participating in the events mentioned above. The program will culminate in December with a presentation by each person, speaking about what they learned.