



New Mexico Human Services Department

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For Immediate Release

New Mexicans to Benefit from Changes in the State's Behavioral Health Services

Santa Fe, January 28, 2004 – Governor Bill Richardson is taking “first steps” for ensuring more New Mexicans benefit from better health care coverage and more access to services. “Behavioral Health is a major priority of my administration,” said Governor Bill Richardson. In this legislative session, which began Jan. 20, a bill creating an Interdepartmental Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (IBHPC) has been introduced. “We have to give up the old ways of thinking about how we deliver behavioral health services in order to improve those services,” said Richardson.

Governor Richardson has asked Human Services Department (HSD) Cabinet Secretary Pamela Hyde, J.D. to take the lead in forming this innovative effort for New Mexico. “The goal of the IBHPC is to create a common behavioral health plan and purchasing process that better addresses the mental health and substance abuse needs of New Mexicans,” said Hyde.

Currently there are nine different state agencies that offer behavioral health services to New Mexicans: HSD, Department of Health (DOH), Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), Department of Corrections, Public Education Department, Aging and Long-term Care Department, Department of Finance and Administration, Department of Transportation, and Vocational Rehabilitation. And often times the agencies are not working together to offer a more seamless, cost effective service for clients. “This new approach to funding and delivering behavioral health services will result in better services, better access and better use of taxpayer dollars,” said Dr. Pamela Martin, DOH Director of Behavioral Health Services Division. Creating a single comprehensive advisory structure will include representatives of all relevant stakeholders with the goal of benefiting the people of New Mexico.

The bill will also create and authorize the IBHPC to design and purchase a common set of services with common expectations and outcomes across multiple departments and funding streams. This is consistent with the President’s New Freedom Commission report that called for a reduction of fragmentation and creation of a single comprehensive state plan as a critical part of improving behavioral health care across the country. “In creating the IBHPC, all of these state agencies have already come to the table and have truly focused on the needs of adults and children seeking these important services,” said Dr. Ken Martinez, CYFD Director of Children’s Behavioral Health.

The Behavioral Health Design Work Group (BHDWG) has already begun the process of designing this new plan and purchasing process, with the input of over 30 stakeholders as advisors. BHDWG is working on a very short timeline. By March 2004, a draft concept paper will be ready for review, with the actual Request For Proposal released by September 2004. By the winter of 2004 the vendor selection process will begin with a transition and contracting by the spring of 2005. The new operating system will be in place by July 1, 2005.

In creating the IBHPC the state is ready to re-structure the way the behavioral health services are provided. “It is time to do what is best for all New Mexicans who need these services,” said Governor Richardson.

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