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For Immediate Release

New Mexico's Next Step in Streamlining Behavioral Health Services Begins with Release of Statewide Entity Request for Proposals (RFP Represents \$250 to \$300 Million in State Services)

Santa Fe, November 3, 2004 – Today the 17 state agencies that make up the Interdepartmental Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (Collaborative) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the statewide entity that will oversee mental health and substance abuse programs offered by the agencies.

“The statewide entity that is chosen will have a very big job of reducing fragmentation and improving quality and access to behavioral health services,” said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary. “I’m confident we will achieve those goals.”

“New Mexico is the first state in the nation to create a collaborative across of all behavioral health services,” Michelle Lujan Grisham Department of Health Secretary-Designee. She and Secretary Hyde are co-chairs of the Collaborative. “We’re working for seamless access for consumers and cost-efficiency for the state’s taxpayers.”

Governor Bill Richardson signed and the State Legislature approved HB 271(Laws 204, Ch. 46), which creates the Collaborative with the intent of providing better mental health and substance abuse services delivery, enable better access and be more efficient with taxpayer dollars. “The goal of the Collaborative 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 Mary-Dale Bolson, Children, Youth and Families Secretary.

“Creating the RFP for the statewide entity was a labor of love, and we are looking forward to receiving and evaluating the responses from local and national bidders,” said Leslie Tremaine, state Behavioral Health Coordinator. The bidder who wins the RFP would be managing combined funds of between \$250 to \$300 million through the different state agencies that offer behavioral health services, including the large Medicaid program, now with over 400,000 participants.

The Collaborative’s timeline to choose a vendor for the Behavioral Health statewide entity is by the end of March 2005, with transition and contracting by the end of June 2005, followed with the new system in operation by July 1, 2005. “The expectations for us on July 1 are pretty simple: Ensure behavioral health clients, including those in the state’s correctional facilities, are served in one coordinated system, and ensure providers are being paid,” said Joe Williams, Corrections Department Secretary.

“We recognize this is a very large contract, but the requirements are very clear in the RFP,” said Catherine Cross Maple, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Secretary. “The vendor selected for this RFP will have to be responsible for ensuring New Mexico’s Behavioral Health customers are getting the very best care possible, with the best outcomes for recovery and resilience.”

The RFP can be found on the HSD website,

<http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/bhdwg/pdf/BHRFP11-3-04final.pdf>

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