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**For Immediate Release**

## **New Mexico Tackles the Issues of the Uninsured—Barriers to Health Care Coverage Focus of Study**

*Santa Fe, April 28, 2004* – It is estimated that approximately 400,000 New Mexicans do not have health care coverage, but why? That is one of the questions Governor Richardson’s Health Care Coverage and Access (HCCA) Task Force hopes to learn through an extensive survey, or set of surveys. “What barriers do New Mexico’s uninsured have and what types of coverage would best meet their needs? That’s what we aim at finding out,” said Pamela Hyde, Secretary of the Human Services Department. Hyde along with Jessica Sutin, the Governor’s Health Care Policy Advisor are leading the Task Force, which has its first meeting this Friday, Apr. 30, at the Albuquerque Public Library, 501 Copper NE from 1 p.m. to 5p.m.

Last year the Human Services Department (HSD) received a \$905,000 grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to focus on New Mexico’s’ uninsured population. “Not only do we hope to learn about the barriers the uninsured face, but we also plan on studying the financial impact of multiple health coverage options on the uninsured, the state’s economy, business community and health care networks,” said Hyde.

The HCCA Task Force will be building on the work they completed last year that resulted in a detailed report to Governor Richardson. That report led to legislation introduced and passed during the past legislative session, including:

- The Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative
- The Comprehensive Statewide Health Plan, and
- Hospital and Nursing Home Oversight

“The HCCA Task Force will continue the process that has begun and help find answers that could lead to health care coverage for all New Mexicans,” said Hyde.

**The first meeting of the HCCA Task Force is Friday, Apr. 30, from 1pm to 5 pm in the auditorium of the Albuquerque Public Library, located at 501 Copper N.E.**

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