



NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
P.O. Box 2348  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2348

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

**Pamela S. Hyde, J.D.**  
*Secretary*

*For further information contact: Betina Gonzales McCracken  
Communications Director, (505) 827-6245 or (505) 699-4675*

**For Immediate Release**

## **Reporters of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse May Benefit with New Law Now in Effect**

(New E-Mail and Toll Free Line Set up to take “Whistleblower” tips)

*Santa Fe, May 19, 2004* – Today the New Mexico False Claims Act signed by the Governor in March is now law. This Act increases the state’s ability to bring suit for Medicaid fraud and recoup the state’s share of funds. “This legislation not only helps New Mexico in fighting fraud, but will also increase the amount of funds recovered and will likely act as a deterrent to submitting inappropriate and false billings to Medicaid,” said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department (HSD) Secretary.

The False Claims Act contains a whistleblower provision that provides incentives for people who come forward with knowledge and evidence of false claims submitted to Medicaid.

“Whistleblowers can be a critical source of information for the state and, at the same time they may benefit by receiving up to 25% of the amount recovered from a successful Medicaid fraud investigation,” said Carolyn Ingram, HSD Medical Assistance Division Director.

New Mexico has successfully worked with the U.S. Attorney General under the Federal False Claims Act, and can now work with New Mexico’s Attorney General to help prosecute Medicaid False Claims that can result in both the state and the “whistleblower” receiving recouped dollars.

HSD has aggressively been increasing fraud and abuse detection and control efforts and will continue with the new Act and with a federal grant that HSD successfully obtained last year. The Payment Accuracy Measurement (PAM) project helps New Mexico set up a new system that all states will have to adhere to when it comes to accuracy of Medicaid payments. “This is a great way for the state to participate and have some influence over what standards are developed nationwide,” said Ingram. Higher Medicaid payment accuracy standards will benefit the program with fewer inaccurate billings.

Reporting a potential Medicaid fraud or abuse situation is as easy as an e-mail or toll free call. The Human Services Department has set up a special e-mail address to report fraud, [NMMedicaidFraud@state.nm.us](mailto:NMMedicaidFraud@state.nm.us) or you can call our Fraud and Abuse Hotline at 1-800-288-7207.

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