



Governor Bill Richardson Names the Statewide Coordinators for New Mexico's Efforts to Reduce DWI and Drug Abuse, and Improve Behavioral Health

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SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson announced today the names of his appointments to lead statewide coordinated efforts in the areas of DWI, drug and substance abuse, and behavioral health. Governor Richardson named **Rachel O'Connor** to be New Mexico's first DWI "Czar", **Herman Silva** as the new Drug "Czar", and **Leslie Tremaine** as the new Czar of the behavioral health initiative

"I am fulfilling an important promise, and taking the unprecedented action of naming three statewide coordinators, I call them "Czars", said Governor Richardson. The "Czars" will oversee and manage New Mexico's efforts to combat DWI and drug abuse, and to cut through the red tape and bureaucracy to get the results we demand."

For the first time, these "Czars" will coordinate the many varied, and sometimes redundant, services, programs, and funding sources that deal with DWI, drug abuse, and behavioral health. One person in each area will manage, coordinate, and most importantly, be accountable for making these efforts effective.

- They will be responsible for coordinating funding and expenditures related to DWI, drug abuse, and behavioral health,
- They will provide a *single point of contact and referral* for governmental agencies, community advocates, and the public,
- They will be responsible for leading the administration's efforts to draft, lobby, and implement legislation aimed at reducing DWI and drug abuse, and delivering effective behavioral health services,
- They will be responsible for creating and implementing statewide education campaigns through the Public Education Department and at the local level, aimed not only at school children but every resident of the state, and
- They will work with law enforcement, the courts, the healthcare system, and the legislature to create effective and innovative approaches to the enforcement of laws, and the design and implementation of treatment programs.

DWI Czar

Rachel O'Connor will be New Mexico's first DWI "Czar".

- She'll be evaluating the effectiveness of existing laws and how the courts interpret and use those laws,
- She'll carry on my efforts to encourage the supreme court to modify the 6-month rule to allow more DWI offenders to be held accountable for their actions,
- Rachel will make sure Governor Richardson's DWI strategies- such as increasing the number of "super blitzes" from 4 to 7 each year- are implemented,
- She'll work with law enforcement and the courts to utilize every available tool, such as ignition interlock devices, are being used appropriately and effectively.

Rachel has more than eight years of experience in state government developing public policy in the areas of injury prevention and providing services to persons with brain injury. She's a strong advocate, has extensive experience working with the legislature, and understands the complex healthcare delivery system. Rachel has a Master's Degree in Public Administration from UNM.

Drug Czar

Herman Silva is the new Drug "Czar". He has more than 25 years of law enforcement experience, as a Deputy Chief for the New Mexico State Police, as an investigator, as Captain of the State Police Narcotics Section, and as a patrolman on the streets. He has handled the coordination of 7 regional narcotics task forces. Herman is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

Behavioral Health Czar

Leslie Tremaine will be the new Czar of the behavioral health initiative. Leslie has more than 25 years of experience in the substance abuse and mental health field. Along with her many other responsibilities, Leslie will be taking the lead in coordinating the Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative, HB 271, which Governor Richardson signed into law earlier this year.

"The nation has its eyes on New Mexico when it comes to substance abuse and mental health care," said Governor Richardson. "We are the first in the nation to create an innovative way of coordinating DWI, substance abuse and mental health care among more than a dozen state agencies."