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For Immediate Release

More Children with Disabilities Benefited From Medicaid School-Based Services Last School Year

Santa Fe, July 27, 2004 – Four thousand more students were served by the Human Services Department's (HSD) Medicaid School-Based Services (SBS) program last school year than during the previous year. "We have made a concerted effort to get more school districts across the state signed up for Medicaid SBS," said Pamela Hyde, HSD Secretary. All but four of the 89 school districts in the state now participate in Medicaid SBS, which provided direct health care services to 14,005 students with special education needs last year.

Medicaid SBS pays for health care services such as physical, speech and occupational therapy, nursing, case management, and mental health services for disabled children in the school setting. In fiscal year 2004, ended June 30, over \$9 million dollars went to help school districts and educational cooperatives participating in the program (every dollar that a school spends on Medicaid SBS is matched at an approximate one-to-three rate by the Medicaid program). This is compared to \$3.7 million the previous year. "These are important services that allow children with disabilities some of the same opportunities as other children by allowing them to more fully participate in the education process," said Hyde.

Under the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA), federal law requires schools to provide disabled children the same access to education as other kids. The Medicaid SBS program helps schools meet this requirement. "We are dedicated to ensuring that all children eligible for these services receive them," said State Representative Rick Miera, who chairs the House Education Committee.

"We have redirected resources inside the Medicaid program to ensure that the SBS program will succeed and that children are getting access to care," said state Medicaid Director Carolyn Ingram. "These changes have been part of the overall redesign of the Medicaid program to make it more effective in providing care for New Mexicans."

The department is also awaiting approval by the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to reinstate administrative services to Medicaid SBS, which will allow schools to bill for services such as outreach and coordination of care. "We hope to have coverage of administrative activities in place by this fall when the school year resumes," said Hyde.

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