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For Immediate Release

State's Newest Pediatric Health Care Initiative, *Envision New Mexico*, to Focus on Reducing the Number of Children at Risk of Becoming Overweight

Bernalillo, May 9, 2005 – Today the Departments of Human Services, Health, Public Education, the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, the New Mexico Pediatric Society and a collaborative of NM health care organizations detailed the *Envision New Mexico* Pediatric Overweight Collaborative, a statewide community plan to help combat the increasing epidemic of overweight children.

Envision New Mexico is an extension of the National Improvement of Child Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) program. "The coordinators of this project will recruit and train practices that serve children and adolescents who are recipients of Medicaid on ways to prevent overweight children," said Carolyn Ingram State Medicaid Director.

Under the direction of UNM Pediatrics faculty member and DOH School Health Officer, Dr. Jane McGrath the statewide initiative is expected to greatly improve health outcomes for children and adolescents across the state. "Our participation in the schools will help us tremendously in this effort," said McGrath. "We plan to test all children who come in to the health centers for obesity through the Body Mass Index (BMI)."

The *Envision New Mexico* project was initially tested with practitioners who treat children suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). "This initial project was successful in treating children suffering from ADHD and we look forward to expanding this project statewide and treating more children for both health issues," said Dr. Amy Scott, *Envision New Mexico* Program Operations Director.

The theme behind the *Envision New Mexico* project is to encourage children and families to "Get More Energy, Energy Means More Fun!!" "Getting more energy can begin with five simple tips for this week," said Ingram.

The *Envision New Mexico* tips are:

1. Get up and Play Hard – Participate in at least 30 to 60 minutes a day of activity, like running, kick ball, soccer, jump rope, bicycling, basketball, baseball, dancing, tag, hopscotch, walking/or playing with your dog. You choose what you like to do!
2. Cut back on TV and Video games – Watch no more than one hour a day and take the TV out of the kid's bedroom.
3. Eat five helpings of fruit and vegetables a day – Change your snacking habits. Snack on grapes, apples, carrots, oranges, celery, bananas, or watermelon instead of chips and cookies.
4. Cut down on sodas and fruit drinks – Drink no more than one can or small cup a day. Drink water when you are thirsty and drink water when you are playing hard!
5. If you are ready to make a change and get more energy, choose any or all of the tips from *Envision New Mexico* and incorporate them into your life everyday.

"It's important that New Mexico's children know that healthy, strong bodies come in all shapes and sizes the most important thing kids can do to get healthier, is get more energy," said Dr. McGrath.

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