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For Immediate Release

Human Services Department Secretary Pamela Hyde Announces New Mexico State Coverage Insurance Contract Agreements

***Insure New Mexico!* initiative part of Governor Bill Richardson's goal of decreasing the number of New Mexicans without health insurance by increasing the number of small employers offering health care coverage.**

Santa Fe, June 23, 2005 – Human Services Department (HSD) Secretary Pamela Hyde reports today that agreements have been reached between the New Mexico State Coverage Insurance (SCI) program and three Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) that will administer this program for low-income New Mexicans beginning July 1. “The SCI is a unique public/private partnership that will help many small employers (including non-profit agencies) get their employees the health care coverage they need,” said Hyde. The program is different because employers and employees help pay the premiums along with the state and federal government.

The three MCOs chosen to administer the \$20 million (state and federal dollars) program for the first year are Lovelace Community Health Plan, Molina Health Care and Presbyterian Health Plan. “They were chosen after careful consideration of proposals submitted to HSD,” said Hyde. “We believe New Mexicans will benefit more by using these MCOs because they already have proven to be successful in providing quality health care across the state.” The three MCOs also administer the Medicaid SALUD! program, with 260,000 participants, most of whom are children.

The SCI is a Medicaid waiver program and will be open to current uninsured adults ages 19 to 65 with family incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level. For example, a family of three whose monthly income is \$2,681 could qualify for SCI. “This program is really geared for working families whose employer is not able to provide health care insurance for their employees,” said Carolyn Ingram, the State Medicaid Director.

Recent household and employer surveys have found that “cost” is the biggest single factor for small employers not offering health insurance; only 47% of small businesses here with 10 or fewer employees offer health insurance, and 30% of New Mexicans living between 100% and 185% of the federal poverty level are uninsured.

The SCI program will help those New Mexicans with the public/private funding formula. The shared premium cost between the employer, the employee, the state and the Medicaid federal match will keep the premiums lower for the employer and employee. “We believe this will make purchasing health insurance for employees more affordable,” said Ingram. Projected enrollment for the first year of SCI is 10,000 people.

Several counties in the state have also expressed an interest in SCI to help insure their uninsured residents. “The SCI may allow counties to use indigent funds to help provide health insurance for more people,” said Mari Spaulding-Bynon, HSD's SCI Program Manager.

The application process for the SCI program begins July 1, 2005. Small employers are encouraged to contact one of the three MCOs to enroll their employees in the program.

- **Lovelace SCI: (505) 232-1860**
- **Molina Health Care: (505) 348-1578 or (866) 403-3018**
- **Presbyterian Health Plan: (505) 923-8201**

For more information about other *Insure New Mexico!* initiatives log on to www.insurenewmexico.state.nm.us or call the Health Insurance Alliance at 1-800-204-4700

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