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For Immediate Release

Human Services Department Secretary Pamela Hyde Urges Parents to Put Health Insurance on their Children's Back to School List

An estimated 50,000 uninsured New Mexico children eligible for Medicaid aren't enrolled in the program.

Santa Fe, August 3, 2005 – Human Services Department (HSD) Secretary Pamela Hyde is urging New Mexico parents to make sure their children are enrolled in a health care program as they prepare for the next school year. “Whether it’s private health insurance or public health care through Medicaid, children should visit a doctor at least once a year to make sure they’re in the best shape possible for learning,” said Hyde. “Once enrolled, children are more likely to get the preventative care they need to stay healthy throughout the year.”

Of the uninsured in New Mexico, recent survey results found that Hispanic and Native American children are disproportionately uninsured. HSD is trying to reach the parents of uninsured children who may qualify for Medicaid through radio announcements, health fairs, and public schools. “Often times it’s the teachers or principals in the schools who recognize a child may not be receiving the health care he or she needs,” said Carolyn Ingram, State Medicaid Director. “We are working with the school districts across the state to try to reach families that may be eligible for low-cost or even no-cost health care through the Medicaid program.

Families with an income level up to 235% of the federal poverty may qualify for Medicaid for their children. A family of four with a monthly income up to \$3,790 may qualify. Parents can call 1-888-997-2583 to quickly find out if their children are eligible for Medicaid.

The Department of Health can also help those families who are not eligible for Medicaid, and do not have private insurance. There are 55 public health offices that provide free immunizations to children who don't have a regular medical provider. Public Health Offices also provide food supplements, education and referral services through the Women, Infant and Children's program. For more information, call your local public health office listed in the state government section of the phone book.

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