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For Immediate Release

New Mexico Medicaid Health Plans Ranked in Top 40 of 190 in the Nation

U.S. News & World Report Ranks "America's Best Health Plans" on Access, Satisfaction, Prevention and Treatment

Santa Fe, October 27, 2006 – *U.S. News and World Report* has ranked all three of New Mexico's Medicaid SALUD! plans in the top 40 in the nation. Lovelace Community Health Plan ranked 22nd, Presbyterian Salud! ranked 33rd and Molina Health Care ranked 37th. "This is good news for the 400,000 plus New Mexicans who are receiving their health care through the Medicaid program," said Secretary Pamela Hyde of the Human Services Department, which administers the Medicaid program in New Mexico. "No matter which plan they choose, New Mexicans are going to get quality health care coverage."

The Medicaid health plans were evaluated in four major categories: access to care, member satisfaction, and effective delivery of preventive services and treatment, based on the findings from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). NCQA examined 684 commercial, Medicaid and Medicare health plans from across the nation, of which 190 are Medicaid programs.

Lovelace received an overall score of 82.9, with its highest marks in overall member satisfaction and treatment. Presbyterian received an overall score of 80.8, with high marks in access to care, overall member satisfaction and treatment. Molina received an overall score of 79.4 with high marks in treatment. The report is intended to help American consumers choose a health care plan based on quality.

Medicaid plays an important role in Governor Bill Richardson's five-point plan to close the uninsured gap in New Mexico. Currently more children, newborn to five years old, now qualify for Medicaid due to changes in eligibility requirements. The Governor announced earlier this year a plan to seek funding to increase coverage for adults through the Medicaid program which would insure an additional 59,000 people over the next two years.

A full set of rankings, plan-by-plan details and the ability to compare plans is available at <http://www.usnews.com/healthplans>.

The story is featured in the November 6, 2006 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, which hit the newsstands beginning October 30.

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