



NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
P.O. Box 2348  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2348

Bill Richardson  
Governor

Pamela S. Hyde, J.D.  
Secretary

Contact: Betina Gonzales McCracken (505) 827-6245 or (505) 699-4675

For Immediate Release

## The First of Three *Insure New Mexico!* Pieces of Legislation Headed to the Governor

### Expanded Health Insurance Alliance Coverage Bill Unanimously Passes Full House

*Santa Fe, February 13, 2006* – Today the House of Representatives unanimously approved **Senate Bill 381, Expand Health Insurance Alliance Coverage**, one of Governor Bill Richardson’s *Insure New Mexico!* initiatives. “This is the first of three bills that the Governor’s *Insure New Mexico!* Council proposed this session to help decrease the uninsured rate in our state,” said Lieutenant Governor Diane D. Denish, chair of the *Insure New Mexico!* Council.

**SB 381** and duplicate **House Bill 24, Expand Health Insurance Alliance Coverage**, sponsored by Senator Sue Wilson Beffort and Peter Wirth, respectively, give employers more options for covering their employees through the Health Insurance Alliance (HIA). “The legislation gives more affordable options to small employers in our state. It assures that employers who offer their employees health coverage through publicly offered programs such as the State Coverage Insurance Program (SCI) may also offer coverage through HIA,” said Denish. **HB 24** is on today’s Senate Floor agenda, and could be heard as early as this afternoon.

The number of uninsured New Mexicans stands at 399,000 or 21.0%, according to the Census Current Population Survey, 2004.

Other *Insure New Mexico!* initiatives continue to make their way through the legislative process:

- **HB 481** and duplicate **SB 280, Health Coverage for All New Mexicans Committee**, is designed to analyze the cost, technical and legal issues of *various* models to achieving health coverage for all New Mexicans.
- **House Bill 118** as amended and **Senate Bill 267** as amended, **Medical or Premium Assistance Program**, authorizes the Human Services Department to provide medical or premium assistance for children who are not Medicaid eligible. This legislation requires funding of \$5.6 million, of which only \$1 million is currently in the budget.

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