



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

Governor Bill Richardson's "Year of the Child" Successful in Addressing the Critical Health Insurance Needs of New Mexico's Children

***Insure New Mexico!* Legislation Will Help More New Mexico Children Get the Health Insurance They Deserve**

Santa Fe, February 16, 2006 – Governor Bill Richardson's *Insure New Mexico!* initiatives to insure more New Mexico children fared well during the "Year of the Child" legislative session.

Two pieces of legislation and several funding measures were passed by both the House and Senate and are now awaiting approval by Governor Bill Richardson. "This legislation will make it easier for children to qualify for Medicaid, expand Medicaid outreach, expand Medicaid prenatal care to more women, and create a premium assistance program for children who do not qualify for Medicaid," said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary. "For the first time we can truly say that every New Mexico child, newborn to five, will have the opportunity to have the health insurance they deserve."

The legislation approved includes:

- **Senate Bill 267**, as amended, the **Medical or Premium Assistance Program**, which authorizes the Human Services Department to provide medical or premium assistance for uninsured children who are not Medicaid eligible, and
- **House Bill 24** and duplicate **Senate Bill 381, Expand Health Insurance Alliance Coverage**, which gives employers more options for covering their employees through the Health Insurance Alliance (HIA).

The funding approved during the legislative session based on the Governor's recommendation includes:

- \$3.7 million to cover new children and adolescents by making it easier for them to qualify for Medicaid,
- \$3.9 million to expand Medicaid prenatal care to women,
- \$4.5 million to change re-certification of Medicaid eligibility from six to 12-months,
- \$4.6 million to expand Medicaid outreach for children,
- \$1 million for Native American Medicaid outreach, and
- \$2.7 million for the Medical or Premium Assistance program.

###