



New Mexico
Higher Education Department

**NEW MEXICO
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Mary-Dale Bolson, Ph.D.
Children, Youth and Families Department Secretary
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For Immediate Release

A Healthy New Mexico and Children's Cabinet Town Hall Meetings Cover Every Corner of New Mexico

**The Lieutenant Governor and Cabinet Secretaries want to hear
from New Mexicans about health, social services
and education needs in their communities**

Santa Fe, March 16, 2006 – Lieutenant Governor Diane D. Denish, along with the Cabinet Secretaries of Health, Human Services, Children, Youth and Families, Aging and Long-Term Services, Public Education, and Higher Education Departments, will be traveling the state this spring to hear from New Mexicans about issues in their communities. “Instead of New Mexico residents reaching out to us, we are reaching out to them and want to hear what their concerns are from children’s to seniors’ issues and everything in between,” said Lieutenant Governor Denish.

The meetings begin Wednesday, March 22 in Raton, through the June 1 meeting in Albuquerque, visiting 14 different towns in between. “The Richardson Administration is committed to reaching and assisting as many communities as possible,” said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary. “Every community has different issues, and we’d like to find out how we can best serve the people of those communities.”

Back in 2003, the Health, Human Services, Children, Youth and Families, and Aging and Long-Term Services Departments, together with the Lieutenant Governor, embarked on a similar tour of Town Hall meetings. During those meetings New Mexico residents gave input on four health and human services initiatives: A statewide comprehensive health plan, a behavioral health plan for children, a long-term care plan for seniors and disabled individuals and the Medicaid system redesign. “We’re coming back to update the New Mexico citizens about what we’ve accomplished since our last tour and to hear about their concerns and priorities. We look forward to receiving input about what more needs to be done to improve the quality of life for New Mexicans,” said Michelle Lujan Grisham, Department of Health Secretary.

One big difference this time is the inclusion of two new departments, the Public Education Department and the Higher Education Department. “We heard loud and clear during the 2003 town hall visits that the education departments needed to be at the table with the Health and Human Services Departments,” said Mary-Dale Bolson, Children, Youth and Families Secretary. “Since then, the two education agencies have been elevated to Cabinet-level positions and will be at the table with us to hear from New Mexico residents.”

Two of the meetings will be Children’s Cabinet-specific Town Hall meetings, while the remaining meetings will be *A Healthy New Mexico* Town Hall meetings and will provide an opportunity for communities to discuss a broad range of topics. “*A Healthy New Mexico* incorporates everything from immunizations, early childhood education, behavioral health, higher education, hunger and protecting vulnerable populations,” said Deborah Armstrong, Aging and Long-Term Services Department Secretary.

The spring meetings will give Health and Human Services and Education Departments an opportunity to detail Governor Richardson’s *Year of the Child* initiatives, which made great progress during this year’s regular legislation session. “Important progress involving *Healthy Kids*, *Keeping Kids Safe Agenda*, and *Making Schools Work - Closing the Achievement Gap* are just the beginning and we pledge to continue these efforts,” said Dr. Veronica C. García, Public Education Department Secretary.

The spring meetings will also give the Higher Education Department an opportunity to detail its plans for the state. “New Mexico is raising the expectation that all New Mexicans can attend and succeed in college by creating a statewide vision for higher education,” said Dr. Beverlee J. McClure, Higher Education Department Secretary-designate.

Below is a list of the meetings scheduled across the state. All New Mexicans interested in Health and Human Services and Education issues in their community are encouraged to attend.

Wednesday, March 22, 6-8:30 p.m. Raton, Raton High School, Media Center

Thursday, March 23, 1:30-4 p.m. Taos, Plaza de Retiro

Friday, March 24, 2-4:30 p.m. Los Alamos, Betty Ehart Senior Center, 1000 Oppenheimer

Saturday, March 25, 9-11:30 a.m. Santa Fe, College of Santa Fe, Forum

***Thursday, April 6, 6-8:30 p.m. Las Cruces, NMSU, Golf Course Club House**

Friday, April 7, 1:30-4 p.m. Silver City, WNMU, Light Hall

Thursday, April 20, 1:30-4 p.m. Navajo Nation, Shiprock Chapter House

Thursday, April 20, 6-8:30 p.m. Farmington City Building, 3041 East Main

Friday, April 21, 1:30-4 p.m. Grants, Cibola County Convention Center

Wednesday, April 26, 6-8:30 p.m. Alamogordo, Civic Center, Main Hall

Thursday, April 27, 1:30-4 p.m. Mescalero, Inn of the Mountain Gods

Friday, April 28, 9-11:30 a.m. Socorro, New Mexico Tech, Galena Room

***Wednesday, May 17, 6-8:30 p.m. Roswell, ENMU, Occupational Tech Center, Room 124**

Thursday, May 18, 1:30-4 p.m. Clovis, Clovis Community College, 417 Schepps Blvd

Friday, May 19, 9-11:30 a.m. Tucumcari, Convention Center

Wednesday, May 31, 1:30-4 p.m. Albuquerque, TVI Workforce Training Center, 5600 Eagle Rock

Thursday, June 1, 9-11:30 a.m. Albuquerque, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th Street NW

*** Indicates Children’s Cabinet Town Hall**

If you are a person with a disability and require a special accommodation to participate in the public meeting, call 505-827-7750 or send an email message to hsdoos.frontdesk@state.nm.us.