



NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
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Governor

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For Immediate Release

**HSD Secretary Pamela Hyde to Host Public Meeting to Receive Input
on “Year of the Child” Legislation**

(Premium Assistance Program Will Insure Children and Pregnant Women)

Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 23, 2006 – The New Mexico Human Services Department is seeking public input on how best to administer a premium assistance program for uninsured children ages zero to five and for pregnant women. The meeting will be held in Albuquerque on Wednesday evening, March 29, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., at the TVI Work Force Training Center, Room 103 (5600 Eagle Rock Avenue NE).

An important component of Governor Bill Richardson’s *Insure New Mexico!* and *Year of the Child* initiatives, the premium assistance program is intended to ensure that all children up to age five have access to health care in New Mexico. Legislation signed into law earlier this year authorizes the department to administer the program for uninsured children who are not otherwise Medicaid eligible. About 21,000 children in this age group are without health insurance. Most are eligible for Medicaid, yet as many as 5,000 who are not eligible for Medicaid could participate in the premium assistance program.

“The Human Services Department has ideas on how to administer the premium assistance program,” said Pamela Hyde, HSD Secretary. “However, we want to hear from the parents of young children, pregnant women and providers as to how best to administer this program.”

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