



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**

## **Self-Directed Care for Persons who are Elderly or Disabled on Medicaid May Soon be a Reality for New Mexicans**

*Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 24, 2006* – In Spanish, *Mi Via* loosely means “my way,” and this is the objective of a Medicaid waiver program that may start enrolling participants as early as July. Over 2,600 low-income persons who are elderly and adults and children with disabilities receiving Medicaid would have the option of creating their own programs of care.

“*Mi Via* is our commitment to provide more home and community-based care and less institutional care for persons who are elderly and disabled,” said Pamela S. Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary. The department administers the Medicaid program, which provides health care to 425,000 people in the state.

Earlier this week, the state’s Health, Human Services and Aging and Long Term Services departments submitted an application to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requesting approval to proceed with the self-directed care programs. “We expect CMS to speedily approve our plans, and we’ll begin signing people up in early July,” said Hyde.

“*Mi Via* will give many of our elderly long-asked-for control over the type of care they receive in home and community settings,” said Deborah Armstrong, Aging and Long Term Services Department Secretary. *Mi Via* participants will have more choices in deciding for themselves what services they actually need, who to hire and how to spend their health care budget. Participants, with the help of a consultant, if necessary, will design their own service plans to meet their medical, functional and social needs. These individual plans and budgets must be submitted to either the Department of Health or the Aging and Long Term Services Department for approval, depending on the category of Medicaid received. When approving participants’ plans, the state agencies will determine if they meet their particular needs, including safety, and achieve the desired outcomes for living in a home and community setting.

Medicaid recipients of long-term services and waiver programs such as the Disabled and Elderly Waiver, the Developmental Disabilities Waiver, the Medically Fragile Waiver and the waiver for individuals with AIDS would be eligible for *Mi Via*. Additionally, persons with brain injuries who meet the criteria for the *Mi Via* waiver program will be eligible. Of the 2,600 people who are expected to choose these programs, about 400 are children.

“Efforts to offer more home and community services for consumers and their families began six years ago,” said Michelle Lujan Grisham, Secretary of the Department of Health. “We greatly valued the help of current Medicaid recipients, families, providers, advocates and others who are committed to *Mi Via*, and we will seek additional input as the program is implemented.”

Please see <http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/mad/waiverprogram.html> for more information about *Mi Via*.

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