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For Immediate Release

Human Services Department Secretary Pamela Hyde Announces the Medicaid Birthing Options Program

Program gives mothers-to-be several delivery choices, including homebirth and birth center midwifery services.

Santa Fe, May 10, 2006 – Secretary Pamela Hyde today announced the implementation of the Medicaid Birthing Options Program, which offers choices for New Mexico’s pregnant women and their families. “This is a terrific program that will help ensure that pregnant women across New Mexico have choices when it comes to receiving the health care they need from conception to birth, and will help reduce the maternal and child health care risks,” said Hyde.

The Birthing Options Program was developed by the state with input and support from the New Mexico Midwives Association, the New Mexico Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives and the SALUD! Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Women in New Mexico have choices when it comes to giving birth through this program, including a birth center, a hospital or at home with the assistance of a midwife. “More people in New Mexico choose midwives for their health care during their reproductive years than any other state in the nation,” said Shiela VanDerveer, Certified Professional Midwife and Outreach Coordinator for the National College of Midwifery in Taos. “The Birthing Options Program is a return to honoring homebirth and midwifery services for Medicaid members.”

Licensed midwives across the nation have had difficulty getting malpractice insurance which did not allow them to receive Medicaid reimbursement for out of hospital births. The Birthing Options Program addresses this issue through agreements with the midwives, the MCOs and the mothers-to-be. “Providing Medicaid recipients with options is a requirement of Medicaid's pregnancy-related health care services, and we are glad that we could reach an agreement with all parties to ensure that this practice continues,” said Larry Heyeck, HSD's Medical Assistance Division Deputy Director.

To qualify for pregnancy-related health care services, which include the new Birthing Options Program, women must be eligible for and enroll in Medicaid. Currently, the income guideline is 185% of the Federal Poverty Level; however, the guidelines change in July, which will allow more women to qualify for the program.

For more information and to choose a health care practitioner, contact the Medical Assistance Division at 1-888-997-2583. For more information regarding services provided by midwives, contact the New Mexico Midwives Association at 1-888-332-4784, the American College of Nurse-Midwives New Mexico chapter at <http://nmmidwives.org/practices.php> or the Department of Health's Maternal Health Program at 505-476-8908.

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