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For Immediate Release

Federal Government Requires Proof of Citizenship and Identification for Medicaid Eligibility Beginning in July

New requirements should not keep people from re-certifying or applying for the Medicaid program.

Santa Fe, June 13, 2006 – The federal government has released new federal requirements for Medicaid under the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) that take effect July 1, 2006. All Medicaid recipients are now required to prove *both citizenship and identity* in order to continue to receive the health care coverage benefit.

“Despite these federal changes, we are encouraging all New Mexicans currently participating in the Medicaid program to re-certify,” said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary. “We will help New Mexicans, especially Native Americans who may not have a birth certificate, get the proper documents needed to stay covered. We want to make sure that New Mexicans continue to get the health care coverage they need to stay healthy.”

American citizenship or legal immigration status has always been a requirement for Medicaid eligibility. However, the DRA now requires actual documentary evidence. Beginning July 1, all Medicaid recipients due for re-certification as well as those applying for the first time must provide documents that prove both citizenship and identity.

A U.S. passport will serve as both proof of citizenship and identity. However, for those without a passport, a document proving citizenship that shows a U.S. place of birth or that the person is a U.S. citizen and a separate document proving identity will be required.

Examples of proof of citizenship documents include:

- A original U.S. birth certificate,
- A certification of birth issued by the Department of State,
- A U.S. hospital record of birth made at the time of birth, created at least five years before the initial application date and indicating a U.S. place of birth,
- Institutional admission papers from a nursing home, skilled nursing care facility or other institution, created at least five years before the initial application date and indicating a U.S. place of birth, and

- People born outside the U.S. who were not citizens at birth must submit a document listed under primary evidence of U.S. citizenship.

In rare circumstances, written affidavits may be used when evidence of citizenship is not available. The affidavits must be supplied by at least two individuals, one of whom is not related to the applicant or recipient. Each must attest to having personal knowledge of the event(s) establishing the applicant's or recipient's claim of citizenship

Examples of proof of identity documents include:

- A current state driver's license with a picture,
- A state-issued identity card for a non-driver with a picture,
- A Certificate of Indian Blood or other U.S. American Indian/Alaska Native tribal document, and
- Children who are age 16 or younger may provide one of the following: A school identification card with a photo; a military dependent's identification card with a photo; a school record that shows a date and place of birth and parent(s) name; clinic, doctor or hospital record showing date of birth; or daycare or nursery school record showing date and place of birth.

The new requirements allow the recipient or the applicant a "reasonable opportunity" to present the documents establishing U.S. citizenship or nationality and identity. "During that time, an individual who is already enrolled in Medicaid will remain eligible if he or she continuously shows a good faith effort to present satisfactory evidence of citizenship and identity," said Hyde.

New Mexico has created a cross-agency team to help Medicaid recipients remain eligible under the new federal guidelines. The Departments of Human Services, Health, Aging and Long-term Services and Taxation and Revenue have been working together to find ways to share information that could help Medicaid recipients with their documentation.

"For example, an electronic match between Medicaid clients and the Department of Health's Vital Records could help prove citizenship for Medicaid clients born in New Mexico who do not have their birth certificates," said Hyde.

Medicaid clients who have questions about the new citizenship document requirements can call the Human Services Department's Medical Assistance Division at 1-888-997-2583 or log on www.state.nm.us/hsd.

To find out how to get a New Mexico birth certificate, please call the Department of Health's Vital Records Bureau at 1-866-534-0051 or log on to their website at <http://dohewbs2.health.state.nm.us/VitalRec/Birth%20Certificates.htm>.

To find out how to get a New Mexico driver's license or identity card, please call the Taxation and Revenue's Motor Vehicle Division at 1-888-683-4636 or log on to their website at http://www.state.nm.us/tax/mvd/mvd_home.htm.

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