



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

Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee to Hold First Meeting

Committee Part of Governor Bill Richardson's Five-Point Plan to Close the Uninsured Gap in New Mexico

Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 8, 2006 – The Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee will hold its first meeting Thursday, August 10, from 9 a.m. to noon at the State Capitol, room 317 in Santa Fe. This is the first of five meetings scheduled through the end of the year. “We have to find a way to cover the nearly 400,000 New Mexicans who currently do not have health insurance,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “The state has made great strides including ensuring that all children five and younger have access to health coverage. Now it is time to make the next move toward a comprehensive health care solution.”

The first meeting of the 23-member committee, appointed by the Governor and the Legislative leadership, will be organizational to discuss the process for carrying out the Committee's charge, which is to develop or identify three to five different health coverage models. A financial analysis will be conducted by national experts with experience in the analysis of the costs of such models. The committee will be responsible for issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selecting a national expert to analyze the different health coverage models and then make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for next steps.

“The Committee has a broad membership, from business to labor, from the health-care and insurance industries to advocates and the uninsured,” said Lieutenant Governor Diane D. Denish, Chair of the Committee. “This will ensure a broad range of solutions that are designed for New Mexico and our specific needs.”

The Human Services Department and the Legislative Council Service are funding the Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee. “For New Mexicans, there is nothing as important as health care for their quality of life, and far too many are hard working citizens who have not been able to provide this necessity to their families,” said Rep. Ben Lujan, Speaker of the House. “It is essential for the Legislative leadership and Legislative Council Service to be involved from the beginning, since many of the proposals that will come from the Committee will likely be considered for legislation by the 2008 Legislative Session.” “I too am pleased to be working with the administration on finding more solutions to provide health care for more New Mexicans,” said Sen. Ben Altamirano, Senate President Pro-Tem.

The following are the meetings dates and topics of all of the Committee meetings.

- August 10, 2006, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., Room 317 State Capitol – Organizational Meeting
- September 7, 2006, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Room 322 State Capitol – Discussion of Potential Models to be Analyzed
- September 27, 2006, 3 p.m. – 7 p.m., Room 317 State Capitol – Public Input Meeting

- October 19, 2006, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Room 317 State Capitol – Approve Models for Inclusion in Request for Proposals
- November 30, 2006, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Room 322 State Capitol – Select Vendor

###