



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

For Immediate Release

## **Legislation to Expand Access to Health Care Coverage for Domestic Partners is Introduced in New Mexico Legislature**

### ***Insure New Mexico!* Council Recommendation to Help Close the Uninsured Gap in New Mexico**

*Santa Fe, January 17, 2007* – Today both the New Mexico Senate and the House of Representatives introduced legislation that would require private commercial insurance carriers to offer health insurance coverage for small employers who *choose* to offer coverage for the domestic partners of their full- and part-time employees.

**Senate Bill (SB) 182 and duplicate House Bill (HB) 15, Requiring Insurers to Offer Health Care Coverage for Certain Domestic Partners**, is sponsored by Senator Cisco McSorley and Representative Peter Wirth, respectively. This legislation is a recommendation of the *Insure New Mexico!* Council as a way to insure more people in New Mexico.

According to the Census Current Population Survey, 2003-2005, 21.1% (401,000) New Mexicans are uninsured, with the highest population between the ages of 18 and 34.

SB 182 and HB 15 will allow New Mexico employers who are interested in offering domestic health coverage for their employees the opportunity to do so, by requiring all insurance carriers to offer a health plan for domestic partners.

Many of New Mexico's largest employers offer domestic partner coverage, including Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, Intel, the University of New Mexico, the City of Albuquerque, the City of Santa Fe and the State of New Mexico.

While many of New Mexico's large insurance companies offer domestic partner health insurance coverage for their own employees, not all carriers offer this type of coverage as one of their products. This bill will ensure a level playing field among private commercial insurance carriers offering domestic partner coverage for small employers.

Domestic partners are defined as two adults over 18 years of age who are committed, have shared a primary residence for at least one year and share financial obligations.

###