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**For Immediate Release**

## **Health Care Coverage for Domestic Partners Legislation Passes House Committees**

### **Bill to Cover More New Mexicans Now Headed to House Floor for Approval**

*Santa Fe, February 1, 2007* – Legislation aimed at insuring more New Mexicans by requiring private commercial insurance carriers to offer health insurance coverage for small employer who *choose* to cover the domestic partners of their employees is headed to the House Floor for approval.

**House Bill (HB) 15 - Requiring Insurers to Offer Health Care Coverage for Certain Domestic Partners** is sponsored by Representative Peter Wirth. This morning the House Health and Government Affairs Committee passed the legislation, which moves the bill to the House floor for approval. Last week the House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee unanimously passed the legislation.

“This legislation is an *Insure New Mexico!* Council recommendation as an initiative to get more uninsured New Mexicans the health care coverage they need,” said Secretary Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department and co-chair of the Council. 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.

During the *Insure New Mexico!* Council meetings over the past three years, small employers brought to the Council’s attention the lack of commercial insurers who offer domestic partner coverage. This legislation ensures a level playing field among private commercial insurance carriers offering domestic partner coverage for small employers.

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.

Duplicate **Senate Bill (SB) 182**, sponsored by Senator Cisco McSorley is scheduled before the Senate Public Affairs Committee this afternoon. SB 182 is also assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

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