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For Immediate Release

## **Legislation to Transfer Portions of the Behavioral Health Services Division to the Human Services Department Unanimously Passes the Senate**

### **Governor Richardson Initiative to Help Continue to Improve Access to Behavioral Health Services Statewide**

*Santa Fe, February 12, 2007* – The New Mexico Senate today unanimously passed legislation that would transfer portions of the Behavioral Health Services Division (BHSD) from the Department of Health (DOH) to the Human Services Department (HSD).

**Senate Bill (SB) 212 - Transfer Behavioral Health Services Division**, sponsored by Senator Mary Kay Papan, is a Governor Bill Richardson initiative to help improve access to behavioral health services statewide through HSD. This legislation allows the focus of public health, including substance abuse prevention to be a continued part of DOH. SB 212 now moves to the House of Representatives, where it has been assigned to the House Health and Government Affairs Committee and the House Appropriations and Finance Committee.

“This move will help streamline behavioral health services for adults, ensure that mental health and substance abuse services are part of the strategy to close the uninsured gap in New Mexico, and open up more possibilities to maximize Medicaid funding for mental health and substance abuse services,” said Secretary Pamela Hyde, HSD.

HSD is the lead agency for both the New Mexico Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (Collaborative) and efforts to close the uninsured gap through *Insure New Mexico!*

The recent Legislative Finance Committee’s performance review of the Collaborative states the proposed move of BHSD to HSD “will provide a good opportunity for the Legislature to further streamline behavioral health administration.”

Both departments will work together to ease the transition, and no full-time employee positions will be lost in the transfer.

Meanwhile, duplicate **House Bill 371**, sponsored by Representative Edward Sandoval has passed both the House Health and Governmental Affairs Committee and the House Appropriations and Finance Committee and is awaiting approval of the full House.

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