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For Immediate Release

House of Representatives Unanimously Passes Legislation to Transfer Portions of the Behavioral Health Services Division to the Human Services Department

Governor Richardson Initiative to Help Continue to Improve Access to Behavioral Health Services Statewide Now Moves to the Senate

Santa Fe, February 14, 2007 – The New Mexico House of Representatives 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).

House Bill (HB) 371a - Transfer Behavioral Health Services Division, sponsored by Representative Edward Sandoval, 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 continue as a part of DOH.

HB 371 now moves to the Senate where, earlier this week, duplicate **Senate Bill 212a**, sponsored by Senator Mary Kay Papen, was unanimously approved and is now on the House side for approval.

“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.

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