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For Immediate Release

Legislature Unanimously Approves the Transfer of Portions of the Behavioral Health Services Division to the Human Services Department

Legislation is a Governor Richardson Initiative to Help Continue to Improve Access to Behavioral Health Services Statewide

Santa Fe, March 10, 2007 – Legislation that would transfer portions of the Behavioral Health Services Division (BHSD) from the Department of Health (DOH) to the Human Services Department (HSD) has unanimously passed both the New Mexico Senate and House of Representatives and is now headed to the Governor for his signature.

Last night the Senate passed **House Bill (HB) 371a - Transfer Behavioral Health Services Division**, sponsored by Representative Edward Sandoval. HB 371a and duplicate Senate Bill (SB) 212a, sponsored by Senator Mary Kay Papen, represent 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.

“The department is looking forward to this move, which 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 Pamela Hyde, HSD Secretary.

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 transfer will take place during Fiscal Year 2008, which begins July 1, 2007. Both departments will work together to ease the transition, and no full-time employee positions will be lost in the transfer.

SB 212 also unanimously passed the Senate, and has since received a “do pass” from the House Health Government Affairs Committee. That bill is awaiting a hearing before the House Appropriations and Finance Committee before going to the full House for approval.

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