



NEW MEXICO
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For Immediate Release

State Schedules Town Hall Meetings to Hear from State Vendors about Health Care Coverage

Input Sought to Help Implement Governor Richardson's Five Point Plan to Close the Uninsured Gap

Santa Fe, March 23, 2007- A Task Force led by the New Mexico General Services and Human Services Departments wants to hear from the public and from those New Mexico companies and vendors who do business with the state about a soon to be implemented requirement that such vendors must offer health care coverage for their employees. This input will be sought during five town hall meetings statewide in April.

The Task Force is charged with one point of the Governor's Five Point Plan to Close the Uninsured Gap in New Mexico: Requiring vendors doing business with the state to offer Comprehensive Health Care Coverage for Employees beginning in Fiscal Year 2008. This requirement will apply to all vendors including; contractors, subcontractors, non-profit agencies and all businesses receiving contracts for service delivery, construction or any other service with the state.

"We first want to find out how many vendors doing business with the state are already offering health care coverage to their employees, how many are not, and what vendors would like to see in the implementation of such a requirement," said Arturo Jaramillo, General Services Department (GSD) Secretary."

The meetings will give vendors and the public an opportunity to comment on several key questions:

- What guidelines should the state consider in determining which employees would be required to be offered health insurance – fulltime, part-time, seasonal or temporary, contract workers, employees' family members?

- What should qualify as “comprehensive health care coverage” for state vendors’ employees?
- What is an appropriate process and timeline for implementing the requirement?
- How can the state assist vendors in implementing the requirement to provide comprehensive health care coverage for their employees?

In addition to the town hall meetings, the Task Force is also conducting a statewide survey to determine how many state vendors currently offer health insurance to their New Mexico employees, and the scope and cost of the coverage. The results of the survey will help determine how many vendors would be in compliance with the proposed state requirement, and what assistance might be required in getting their employees covered.

“Giving the public and vendors an opportunity to assist in the development of this program is crucial and will help ensure its success,” said Pamela Hyde, Secretary of the New Mexico Human Services Department. “The Town Hall meetings will also be a great opportunity for vendors who are not covering their employees now to learn about the many affordable *Insure New Mexico!* Solutions already available to small employers in the state.”

For those vendors who cannot attend one of the five town hall meetings, written comments may be submitted by e-mail to vendor.project@state.nm.us.

State vendors interested in learning more about any of the *Insure New Mexico!* Solutions are encouraged to call the *Insure New Mexico!* Solutions Center at 1-866-901-4538 to determine the health insurance options that may fit their businesses.

Date	City	Meeting Location	Time
April 2	Santa Fe	Harold Runnels Bldg. Auditorium 1190 St. Francis Drive	4:30 -6:30 p.m.
April 4	Albuquerque	HSD Income Support Office 4330 Cutler Ave. N.E.	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
April 11	Las Cruces	Bruce King Farm and Ranch 4100 Dripping Springs Road	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
April 12	Roswell	New Mexico Military Institute Daniel Leadership Center Auditorium 101 West College Boulevard	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
April 24	Farmington	San Juan College Student Center Rooms 1010 & 1012 4601 College Boulevard	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

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