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**For Immediate Release**

## **New Mexico's Medicaid Managed Care Organizations Make Significant Improvements in Disease Management**

### **Adults With Diabetes and Children With Asthma See More Access to and Quality of Care**

**Santa Fe, New Mexico** – The New Mexico Human Services Department is pleased to report findings from an independent assessment of New Mexico's Medicaid managed care program, SALUD!

The Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) conducted an assessment of the quality of and access to care for people with chronic disease receiving care through the SALUD! Managed Care Organizations (MCOs).

The study focused on adults with diabetes and children with asthma and the performance of the three MCOs operating in SALUD! prior to July 2008: Lovelace Community Health Plan, Molina Healthcare, and Presbyterian Health Plan.

Diabetes was chosen as an area of focus due to the high prevalence in New Mexico and because much of the burden of illness and cost of diabetes treatment is attributed to potentially preventable long-term complications including heart disease, blindness, kidney disease and stroke.

Asthma is one of the nation's most common and costly diseases. The state chose to monitor the use of appropriate medications for people with asthma because many asthma-related hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and missed work and school days can be avoided if patient's medications are managed appropriately.

Key findings from the assessment include:

- Utilization of primary care and preventive/ambulatory care services among enrollees with chronic conditions is high across all three SALUD! MCOs.
- Access to primary care for adults with diabetes who are continuously enrolled in SALUD! improved over the measurement period 2005 to 2007. Over 96% of adults with diabetes received a preventive or ambulatory visit, thus demonstrating the medical home concept advocated by managed care is being effectively deployed.
- Hospital admissions related to uncontrolled diabetes or complications of diabetes decreased by over 20% from 2005 to 2007.

- Among children with persistent asthma, ages five to 17, the SALUD! MCOs have achieved almost universal access to primary care practitioners (90% to 99%). Over 91% of children with persistent asthma received appropriate asthma medication.
- All three MCOs demonstrated significant improvements in quality of care through the reduction of both asthma-related emergency department (ED) visits and asthma-related hospital admissions.
- The number of asthma-related ED visits decreased by 16% to 27%; asthma-related hospital admission rates decreased by 11% to 85% from 2005 to 2007.

“As the SALUD! program continues to grow in size and scope it is important to know the quality of care is keeping up with the needs of the program participants,” said Carolyn Ingram HSD Medical Assistance Division Director. “These assessments allow us to see where improvements are taking place and where improvements need to take place.”

The complete assessment can be found on the Human Services Department website at [www.hsd.state.nm.us/mad/salud](http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/mad/salud).

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