



Bill Richardson
Governor

NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 2348
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2348

Pamela S. Hyde, J.D.
Secretary

Contact Betina Gonzales McCracken 505 827-6245

May 14, 2008
For Immediate Release

New Mexico Human Services Department to Receive *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant*

Grant to Help Evaluate Small Employers Participation in the State Coverage Insurance Program

Santa Fe, New Mexico – The New Mexico Human Services Department is one of 15 institutions nationwide to receive a *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation State Health Access Reform Evaluation (SHARE) 2008 Grant* and is the only state agency awarded the grant. New Mexico is among good company, as the other awardees are prestigious universities and think tank groups.

Of the \$5 million SHARE grant total, New Mexico has been awarded nearly \$200,000 to examine small employers who have participated in the State Coverage Insurance (SCI) program, and those who have decided not to participate and why.

The SCI program is a public/private partnership health coverage plan for uninsured adults ages 19 to 64, designed to help New Mexico small employers with affordable health coverage for their employees. The program currently covers nearly 17,000 adults with approximately 700 small employer groups participating. The SCI program began in 2005.

“This study will help New Mexico determine why some small employers find the SCI program a beneficial health coverage plan for their employees and why some employers choose not to participate,” said Pamela Hyde, HSD Secretary. “As we find answers to those questions for New Mexico’s benefit, this study will also have a national significance as states look at programs like SCI to help them with answers for helping the uninsured adults in their state.”

HSD is partnering with The Hilltop Institute (formerly the Center for Health Program Development and Management) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), who will perform the evaluation. “As a long-time research contractor with New Mexico, UMBC recognized that the SCI program was the perfect program to be evaluated by the SHARE grant,” said Charles Milligan, J.D. MPH, Hilltop’s Executive Director. “We look forward to learning what factors influence employer participation in SCI.”

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation notified Governor Richardson last month that the HSD was awarded the SHARE grant for a total of \$195,855 to be used beginning this month through October 31, 2009. New Mexico is also one of the study states being evaluated by two of the other SHARE grantees. Rutgers University is evaluating the extension of dependent coverage to young adults and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health is looking at incremental strategies to cover low-income uninsured adults, both initiatives New Mexico has tackled under the Governor Richardson administration.

More details about the SHARE grant and the grant awardees can be found at <http://www.statereformevaluation.org/Home-5341.html>.

About the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

###