



For Immediate Release
August 16, 2008

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Governor Bill Richardson's Health Care Reform Package Introduced in Legislative Special Session

**Bills Reform Insurance, Cover All Uninsured New Mexico Children,
Consolidate Public Programs and Protect Patient Privacy**

Santa Fe, New Mexico – Governor Bill Richardson's Health Care Reform Package has been introduced in the 2008 Legislative Special Session. The three bills introduced in the House and Senate focus on insurance reform, including covering all uninsured New Mexico children, consolidation of public programs, and electronic protection of patient privacy.

“My health care reform package will give 50 thousand uninsured children access to health care, will assure patient's medical records remain private, will reform health insurance, and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy,” said Governor Richardson. “This package is fiscally responsible, meets the urgent need to cover every child, and makes insurance more affordable at a time when state government can afford to help its citizens.”

Senate Bill 22, Health Insurance Reform is sponsored by Senator Mary Jane Garcia. This legislation focuses on insurance reform issues that include; guaranteed coverage despite pre-existing conditions, requiring insurance companies spend 85 percent of premiums collected on direct services, a phased in reduction of rate increases due to health experience for small employers and a requirement that children through age 18 enroll in a health coverage plan as well as the funds to cover all children eligible for public programs in the state.

Senate Bill 19, the Health Care Benefits Act is sponsored by Senator Tim Jennings. This bill creates the Health Care Benefits Administration and phases in consolidation of public health coverage programs which will lead to more efficient and effective administration.

House Bill 5, the Electronic Medical Records and Health Information Exchange Act is sponsored by Representative Peter Wirth. This Act will protect patient privacy during electronic medical record exchanges and clarify when and how electronic medical records can be used.”

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