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## **New Mexico Awarded \$5.1 Million Bonus for Boosting Children's Health Coverage Enrollment**

**SANTA FE** – The U.S. Health and Human Services Department has announced New Mexico is one of nine states to receive a bonus for making significant progress in enrolling uninsured children in a health coverage program through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). New Mexico's bonus equals \$5.1 million.

"New Mexico has made significant improvements over the past few years to make it easier for children to get and keep health coverage through Medicaid or CHIP. This bonus reflects that hard work with nearly 316,000 children now covered," said Governor Bill Richardson.

To receive the performance bonus, New Mexico had to meet two types of performance goals set forth in the CHIP Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) statute. Most of the performance measures New Mexico was already implementing, including a significant increase in Medicaid enrollment over the course of the past year. A year-to-date comparison of children's coverage through Medicaid and CHIP shows a 5.7 percent increase. Since 2003 the percentage of children covered through the two programs has increased by 20.7 percent.

"Initiatives such as easier renewal by phone, fax, email or mail and using a joint application for both Medicaid and CHIP, are just a few of the ways the Human Services Department has encouraged enrollment and retention of children participating in the health coverage programs," said Katie Falls, Human Services Department Secretary-designate.

The federal bonus comes at a good time, as the Human Services Department is currently dealing with a Medicaid budget shortfall for the current budget year of approximately \$40 million and a projected shortfall of more than \$300 million for State Fiscal Year 2011.

In New Mexico children qualify for Medicaid or CHIP if the family's income is at or below 235 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. For example a family of three with an annual income at or below \$43,044, the children would qualify for coverage. Parents interested in enrolling their children in Medicaid or CHIP can call the *Insure New Mexico!* Solutions Center at 1-888-997-2583 or can get an application by visiting [www.insurenewmexico.net](http://www.insurenewmexico.net).

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