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The NM Human Services Department Schedules *Medicaid Coverage Concept* Public Meetings

New Opportunities and Efficient Strategies for Health Coverage for New Mexicans

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Human Services Department has scheduled six public meetings and one tribal consultation to discuss the proposed *Medicaid Coverage Concept* developed to improve the current Medicaid program and create new options for more uninsured New Mexicans.

“New Mexico is eager to begin working toward changing the Medicaid program in a way that will offer affordable health insurance coverage to more uninsured New Mexicans,” said Katie Falls, Human Services Department Secretary-designate. “The options presented will closely align New Mexico’s health reform efforts with those of the federal government, resulting in an important movement and culture shift toward quality-driven, fiscally and administratively efficient coverage.”

Providing affordable health insurance options to the uninsured through the Medicaid program, and through hybrid public/private programs such as the State Coverage Insurance (SCI) are critical components of the *Medicaid Coverage Concept*.

“The current economic times present a timely opportunity to design a Medicaid plan that can respond to the state’s financial pressures while at the same time preserving and improving the program for the people of New Mexico who need it the most,” said Carolyn Ingram, Human Services Department Medical Assistance Division Director. “Designing a program in ways that are fiscally and administratively efficient with Medicaid as the foundation can benefit more uninsured New Mexicans and small employers throughout the state.”

Some of the options and ideas for expanding and financing Medicaid and SCI coverage for adult and children are included in a *Concept* paper that will be discussed during the upcoming public meetings. They include:

- **Medicaid Service Plan** – Proposes to change the Medicaid program in a way that offers federally mandated benefits to federally mandated populations.
- **State Coverage Plan** – The State Coverage Plan will be made available to children above the mandatory level of coverage, up to a yet-to-be determined Federal Poverty Level; and adults (both parents and childless adults) up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level who are not eligible for the Medicaid Service Plan. For these optional

populations, the State Coverage Plan could be similar to the current SCI program in its benefit structure, providing broad coverage and higher levels of cost sharing for recipients.

- **Benefit Riders and Other Options** - Certain optional Medicaid benefits that are not covered under the State Coverage Plan may be made available as benefit riders available for purchase by Medicaid Service Plan and State Coverage Plan beneficiaries. These benefit riders could include vision and dental services, and other services that are no longer part of the basic benefit package, but which can be offered to beneficiaries at affordable rates.
- **Introducing Buy-In** – A proposal to introduce buy-in to the State Coverage Plan (and possibly the Medicaid Service Plan) for certain employer groups to facilitate coverage for working individuals and their families above State Coverage Plan eligibility levels.

The public meetings to discuss and gather input on the *Medicaid Coverage Concept* are being held in Española, Albuquerque, Farmington, Roswell, Las Cruces, and Las Vegas, and the Tribal Consultation in Albuquerque.

- **Española - Wednesday, December 9, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** - Española City Hall – City Council Chambers, 405 Paseo de Oate
- **Albuquerque - Friday, December 11, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – Anderson-Abruzzo International Balloon Museum – Pugash Hall, 9210 Balloon Museum Dr. NE
- **Farmington – Friday, December 11, 2009 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.** – San Juan Community College, Henderson Fine Arts Building, 4601 College Blvd.
- **Roswell - Monday, December 14, 2009 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** – New Mexico Military Institute – Mabee Lecture Hall, 101 West College Blvd.
- **Las Cruces - Tuesday, December 15, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – NM Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum – Rio Hondo Room (Museum Theater), 4100 Dripping Springs Rd.
- **Las Vegas - Wednesday, December 16, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** – NM Highlands University – Leveo Sanchez Lecture Hall (G-35), 802 National Avenue
- **Tribal Consultation - Friday, December 18, 2009 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** – Sandia Casino, 30 Rainbow Road, NE in Albuquerque

A copy of the draft *Medicaid Coverage Concept* paper that will be used for discussion during the public meetings can be found on the Human Services Department website at www.hsd.state.nm.us under “what’s new”.

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