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SCHIP Reauthorization Will Benefit New Mexico Children

More Funding and Simpler Document Verification Part of New Rules

Santa Fe, New Mexico – New Mexico children will benefit through the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) signed this week by President Barack Obama.

"The reauthorization of the SCHIP program is great news for New Mexico's children," said Carolyn Ingram, Director of the Human Services Department's Medical Assistance Division. "It will help keep the 12,000 children currently enrolled in SCHIP covered, and allow New Mexico to reach out to the estimated 30,000 children who are eligible, but not enrolled."

The reauthorization of SCHIP takes effect April 1, 2009 through September 2013 and means an increase of \$196.2 million in SCHIP funds during this current budget year for New Mexico, which is the fourth largest percentage increase of any state at 277 percent.

In order to receive the SCHIP funds, New Mexico has to invest general fund dollars to the program to get the federal match, which is at 80 percent for New Mexico.

The Medicaid and SCHIP in New Mexico is called the *New MexiKids* program, and combined the programs are covering more than 300,000 children in New Mexico. Coverage is available for children with household incomes up to 235% of the Federal Poverty Level. For example a family of three with a yearly income below \$41,364 would qualify.

Other benefits from the SCHIP reauthorization include:

- Allows Social Security Numbers to be used to match for citizenship, rather than original birth certificates.
- Allows tribal documents to be used for citizenship verification of Native Americans
- Allows non-citizen legally admitted children to be eligible for SCHIP, rescinding the five-year bar
- Allows New Mexico to apply available SCHIP balances to Medicaid children whose family income exceeds 133% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Allows SCHIP waivers for adults with children to continue to receive coverage through September 30, 2011. (Childless adults on existing waivers will be phased out by the end of Calendar Year 2009.)

For information about the *New MexiKids* program or other publicly-funded health care programs available through the Human Services Department's Medical Assistance Division, call the *Insure New Mexico!* Solutions Center at 1-888-997-2583 or visit

<http://www.insurenemexico.state.nm.us/default.aspx>

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