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## **New Mexico House of Representatives Approves Speaker Lujan's Health Care Partnership Act**

### **Legislation is Compromise Approach to Health Care Reform**

*Santa Fe, New Mexico* – Today the New Mexico House of Representatives approved the House Appropriations and Finance Committee substitute for House Bill 779, the Health Care Partnership Act, a bill sponsored by House Speaker Ben Lujan and other key Representatives and part of Governor Bill Richardson's Health Care Reform Agenda.

"I would like to thank my colleagues in the House of Representatives who voted in favor of this important piece of legislation that addresses health care access, quality, coverage and costs," said Speaker of the House Ben Lujan. "I also want to encourage the Senate to act quickly on this compromise approach to health care reform. This creates a process that will be inclusive to take the necessary steps to move us forward to address one of the most difficult challenges we face."

The Health Care Partnership Act will set the framework and take real steps toward controlling the cost of health care and health coverage; addressing the quality of health care to achieve real outcomes; setting standards for access and workforce capacity in New Mexico; and increasing health coverage and portability options for New Mexicans. The bill calls for the following:

1. Conduct studies to make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor by September 1, 2010 concerning coverage, quality, access and other health care issues.
2. Develop essential, expanded and long-term services benefit plans that employers and individuals can buy into
3. Develop potential financing mechanisms for paying for these plans
4. Develop affordability guidelines that the legislature can use if and when these funds are available to assist individuals in participating in these plans
5. Authorize the Human Services Department to offer these partnership benefit plans to employers, individuals, and other groups, using private sector insurance companies where appropriate, and using state, federal and private dollars as available and appropriate to increase coverage and portability
6. Authorize the Department of Health to review and adopt practice and access standards for health care in New Mexico.

HAFC substitute for HB 779 does not create any new administrative infrastructures, nor does it mandate anyone to have insurance other than nonresident students who are enrolling in New Mexico educational institutions.

There is a one-time appropriation of \$500,000 for the legislative council services for use by the Partnership in accomplishing its work.

HAFC substitute for HB 779 now moves to the New Mexico Senate for consideration.

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