



NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 2348
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2348

Bill Richardson
Governor

Pamela S. Hyde, J.D.
Secretary

Contact Betina Gonzales McCracken 505 476-6205

For Immediate Release
September 10, 2009

U.S. Census Report Shows Decrease in Uninsured Children and Increase in Uninsured Adults in New Mexico During 2008

Employer-Sponsored and Private Insurance Coverage Continues to Decline

Santa Fe, New Mexico – The 2008 U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) released today shows a slight increase in the number of people in New Mexico without health coverage during the three year average 2006-2008 from the previous report with 450,000 people without coverage.

However, the percentage of uninsured children declined, while the percentage of uninsured adults increased. The CPS report notes less private and employer-sponsored health coverage as a big factor in the increase nationally.

“Today’s report is yet another indication of the critical need for health care reform at the national and state level,” said Governor Bill Richardson. “It is unacceptable that health coverage is becoming less and less accessible and affordable for the average American.”

The three year 2006-2008 average percentage of people without health coverage in New Mexico increased to 23.0 percent (450,000 people) from 21.9 percent (425,000 people). The number of people without health coverage nationally went from 45.7 million to 46.3 million. The report found more people turning to publicly funded programs for coverage.

“With fewer employer-sponsored health coverage options available for New Mexicans, we have seen a large number of people who qualify turn to publicly funded programs for their health coverage needs,” said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department Secretary.

The CPS report found an increase in the percentage of uninsured adults in New Mexico at 25.5 percent in 2008 from 23.4 percent in 2007. However, fewer children are uninsured in New Mexico at 16.6 percent in 2008 down from 18.0 in 2007.

“This is the second year New Mexico has seen an improvement in its uninsured rate for children, which is an indication that the Governor’s initiative to cover more children is working,” said Hyde.

New Mexico is currently at an all time high enrollment in public health coverage programs through the *Insure New Mexico!* Solutions, which include Medicaid and other premium assistance programs, with approximately 500,000 people enrolled, 310,000 of them children.

Since Governor Richardson took office several *Insure New Mexico!* initiatives have been implemented, making more affordable coverage available for New Mexico's small employers, nonprofit agencies, individuals and options for every New Mexico child under the age of 12 years old. The solutions include:

- State Coverage Insurance (SCI) Program – A public/private partnership to help small employers purchase affordable health insurance,
- Increased emphasis on children ages zero to five – Allowing more family earned income and child care costs to be disregarded to enroll more children under five in Medicaid,
- Premium Assistance for Kids (PAK) Program – State funded premium assistance for coverage for those uninsured children up to age 12, and up to age 18 with a sibling under 12, whose family income is too high to qualify for Medicaid and who does not have an employer to offer coverage for an employee's children,
- Premium Assistance for Maternity (PAM) – State funded premium assistance for pregnancy related services for women whose income is slightly too high to qualify for Medicaid and who has no coverage,
- Increased Eligibility for Medicaid Family Planning and Pregnancy – Increased enrollment to cover families with incomes up to 235 percent of the Federal Poverty level for pregnancy-related medical services,
- Lower Health Insurance Alliance Rates – Lowered rates through the New Mexico Health Insurance Alliance so more small employers could afford coverage from private insurers.

The CPS survey was conducted during the Spring of 2009 for the calendar year 2008. During that time respondents were asked whether or not they have had health insurance at any period during the previous year. If the answer is yes, that person is considered “insured.”

Medicaid and Medicare are considered insurance, however individuals who rely on the Indian Health Services, free clinics, and/or a hospital emergency room as providers of health care are considered “uninsured.”

The complete U.S. Census CPS report can be found at www.census.gov.

###