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New Mexico Office of Health Care Reform and Leadership Team Looking for Health Insurance Exchange Planning Grant Contractors

Nine Requests for Applications Focus on Data Collection and Analysis of New Mexico's Health Care Needs

Santa Fe – The New Mexico Office of Health Care Reform (HCR) and HCR Leadership Team has issued nine Requests for Applications (RFAs) totaling \$200,000 to assist in gathering data and analysis of New Mexico's health care needs as the state prepares implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

“The State needs to know the health care needs of New Mexico's population as it prepares to plan and build a Health Insurance Exchange or Exchanges, which will be the “go to place” for New Mexicans to get their health coverage plans,” said Katie Falls, Human Services Department Secretary and chair of the HCR Leadership Team. “We need to know more about New Mexico's small employers, health care providers and of course individuals and families who will be accessing their health care coverage through the Exchange.”

The funding for the contracts comes from the \$1 million federal Health Insurance Exchange Planning Grant New Mexico received in September 2010 from the U.S. Health and Human Services Department.

The scopes of work for the nine RFAs are posted on the Human Services Department's website at <http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/nhcr/nhcr/laio.htm> under the “leadership team” tab. The general descriptions of the RFAs are:

Exchange Planning Grant RFAs	Proposed Amount
Data collection & analysis of NM's insurances' plan design and products	\$10,000
General Consumer Focus Groups	\$20,000
Small Employer Focus Groups	\$20,000
Health care provider input and analysis	\$50,000
Consumer input & analysis – individuals/families in need of mental health and	\$20,000

substance abuse services	
Consumer input & analysis – individuals/families living with a disability	\$20,000
Consumer input & analysis – sex and gender implications	\$20,000
Consumer input & analysis – young adults and those who are marginally employed	\$20,000
Consumer input & analysis – Spanish – only speaking individuals and individuals who are not eligible for services due to citizenship but whose children are	\$20,000

In addition and through a General Services Agreement, the Indian Affairs Department will be gathering much needed data in reference to the Native American population in New Mexico. Under the Affordable Care Act, Native Americans are not mandated to have health coverage by 2014. However, they can participate and get their coverage through a Health Insurance Exchange, if they so choose with special provisions, such as no cost-sharing, more frequent enrollment periods, and no penalty for failure to carry minimum coverage.

The Health Insurance Exchange(s) must be up and running by 2014. However, states that have determined to plan their own Exchanges are required to prove to the federal government they are prepared for the 2014 deadline by 2013. Well designed Health Insurance Exchanges will create:

- Lower Costs: Exchanges will increase competition among private insurance plans through greater comparative shopping and more informed consumers. They will also provide small businesses the same purchasing power in Exchanges as large businesses.
- One-Stop Shopping: Exchanges will make purchasing health insurance easier by providing eligible consumers and small businesses with tools to compare benefits, pricing, and quality, to help make the best choice for themselves, their families, or their employees.
- Greater Benefits and Protections: Exchanges will create a health insurance marketplace that will allow small businesses and consumers to choose from plans offering high quality benefits. Individuals and families purchasing health insurance through Exchanges may also qualify for tax credits and reduced cost-sharing depending on their income.

About the Health Care Reform Leadership Team and Office of Health Care Reform

The Health Care Reform Leadership Team was put together by Executive Order in April 2010 to develop a strategic plan and recommendations to prepare New Mexico for implementation of the Affordable Care Act. It is chaired by the Human Services Department Secretary Katie Falls. Other members include the Secretaries of: the Department of Health, Department of Workforce Solutions, Taxation and Revenue, Information Technology, Children, Youth and Families, Aging and Long Term Services, Indian Affairs, Finance and Administration, Public Education, Higher Education, Director of the Risk Management Division of the General Services Department, the Superintendent of the Public Regulation Commission, Division of Insurance, the Behavioral Health Collaborative CEO, the Director of the Workers' Compensation Administration, Director of the Women's Health Advisory Council, and a representative from the Governor's office.

The Office of Health Care Reform was put together by Executive Order in August 2010 to lead the executive branch and collaborative with the HCR Leadership Team in establishing policies, priorities, and objectives for state government's comprehensive effort in reaching the state's goals for implementation. It is housed with the Human Services Department.