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New Mexico Medicaid Director Selected for Medicaid Leadership Institute

Initiative will enhance the leadership capacity of Medicaid directors to pursue innovation in publicly financed programs to deliver higher quality, more cost-effective health care services

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Human Services Department announced today that Julie Weinberg is one of six Medicaid directors chosen nationally to participate in the *Medicaid Leadership Institute*. The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) directs this initiative, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), to build the capacity of Medicaid directors to transform their programs into national models for accessible, cost-effective care.

“It is important that we build a sustainable Medicaid program in New Mexico for today and into the future, especially for those who need it the most,” said HSD Secretary Sidonie Squier. “The experiences and knowledge gained by Julie Weinberg in this program will be invaluable to our state as Medicaid Modernization moves forward. I congratulate Julie on her selection to this program.”

Julie Weinberg was competitively selected to participate in the executive leadership development program along with five additional Medicaid directors: Jennifer Vermeer, Iowa; Kathleen Dunn, New Hampshire; Valerie Harr, New Jersey; Elena Nicolella, Rhode Island; and Billy Millwee, Texas.

“National health reform offers an opportunity for Medicaid directors to lead the way in improvements in our health care system. Medicaid will be at the center of many of the changes taking place, and the role of the program’s directors will be more important than ever,” said John Lumpkin, MD, MPH, senior vice president and director of the health care group at RWJF. “We are proud to support the professional development of these dedicated leaders whose work will be in the spotlight as Medicaid takes on an expanded responsibility for insuring Americans.”

The 2012 class of the *Medicaid Leadership Institute* is the third group of Medicaid directors chosen for this prestigious executive training program. Since 2009, directors from 17 states serving nearly 34 million beneficiaries -- roughly 55 percent of the national Medicaid population -- have participated in the

year-long curriculum. The program is managed by CHCS and directed by Carolyn Ingram, senior vice president at CHCS and former New Mexico Medicaid director.

“Each of these six Medicaid directors is essentially the CEO of one of the largest health insurers in his or her state. We are excited to work with these executives who are passionate about maximizing the value of their programs for millions of beneficiaries,” said Ms. Ingram. “Julie Weinberg and the other Medicaid directors chosen bring a diverse array of experiences to the *Institute* and will collectively spur each other to take full advantage of opportunities to transform the nation’s health care safety net.”

The 12-month *Institute* is designed to enhance the strategic thinking, substantive knowledge, individual leadership, and technical skills that directors need to effectively lead and foster innovation in their state Medicaid programs. For more information about the *Medicaid Leadership Institute*, visit www.medicaidleaders.org.

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About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.

About the Center for Health Care Strategies

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) is a nonprofit health policy resource center dedicated to improving health care quality for low-income children and adults, people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, frail elders, and racially and ethnically diverse populations experiencing disparities in care. CHCS works with state and federal agencies, health plans, providers, and consumer groups to develop innovative programs that better serve people with complex and high-cost health care needs. Its program priorities are: enhancing access to coverage and services; improving quality and reducing racial and ethnic disparities; integrating care for people with complex and special needs; and building Medicaid leadership and capacity.