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Human Services Department Announces Centennial Care Agreement in Principle

Santa Fe – Today the Human Services Department (HSD) announced a big step in moving forward with implementing a next generation Medicaid program in New Mexico. An Agreement in Principle has been reached between the State and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on the Centennial Care Medicaid Waiver.

“We are glad to see that CMS recognizes the central focus of Centennial Care is a robust care coordination system that will help ensure that recipients receive the care they need to stay as healthy as they can,” said HSD Secretary Sidonie Squier. “We will likely see improved health outcomes and healthier New Mexicans in the years to come.”

“We have made significant progress in developing terms for a demonstration that will enable the State to assure Medicaid beneficiaries access to a fully integrated, coordinated service delivery system. We particularly appreciate the focus on care coordination as a means to assuring the delivery of the right care at the right time and in the right settings,” Cindy Mann, Director of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services, said in the Agreement. “We believe the combination of an integrated service delivery system combined with the robust care coordination requirements has the potential to benefit all New Mexicans in the Medicaid program.”

As outlined in the Agreement in Principle, CMS has agreed to:

- Support for the new integrated Community Long Term Benefit that will enable those individuals who meet nursing facility level of care access to a wide range of services designed to keep them in their homes and communities;
- Support for the requirement that Native American Medicaid beneficiaries who meet nursing facility level of care, or who are both Medicaid and Medicare eligible, be required to enroll in Centennial Care to access benefits while other Native American Medicaid beneficiaries can voluntarily enroll in the program which has been designed to address needs and concerns of Native American Medicaid beneficiaries; and

The only outstanding items on which HSD and CMS must agree are the movement of the Sole Community Provider program into the Centennial Care waiver and overall budget neutrality. Work continues on these items and should be wrapped up soon.

A one-year planning and transition period will continue throughout 2013 with full implementation beginning on January 1, 2014, something CMS noted as a very important step in this process.

“We recognize that you have already begun work on program implementation and we appreciate that the State has planned a long lead time to ensure successful implementation,” Director Mann said in the Agreement. “We look forward to working with you further on moving the waiver towards final completion.”

Key aspects of the Centennial Care waiver include:

- Greater administrative simplicity and reorganization of HSDs Medicaid Division to manage Medicaid more efficiently;
- Requiring care coordination for recipients to ensure they receive the right care in the right setting at the right time;
- Incentives to reduce the inappropriate usage of emergency rooms, including copays for non-emergency use of the emergency room;
- Strategies for encouraging healthy behaviors and use of the primary care system in order to prevent health problems and to reduce chronic disease; and
- Efforts to expand the ability of health care specialists to reach rural areas through the use of technology, such as Project ECHO.

The Agreement in Principle letter can be found on HSDs website by navigating to <http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/> and then clicking on “New Mexico Centennial Care” on the right hand side of the page.

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