



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson

Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson announces plan to Consolidate mental health care and behavioral health care services.

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today directed several state agencies to consolidate mental health care and behavioral health care services.

Governor Bill Richardson delivered the following prepared remarks:

Today, I am making mental health care a priority in New Mexico. Mental health is as important as physical health. For too long, we have placed mental health care in an inferior position. Those days are gone. We have had a policy of confusion and duplication that is neither cost efficient or effective for our people. I want all mental health care programs, behavioral programs to be better coordinated so that New Mexicans can receive the best care in the most cost effective way. We must revamp our program to meet the current challenges. We will move away from multiple HMOs and multiple state agencies to a single provider under a single administrator. It's time for the right hand to know what the left hand is doing.

I am officially announcing a new direction to place mental health care under one roof. I have ordered a mental health care, behavioral health care carve out from, not just the Medicaid program, but across all state agencies for all programs.

Over the past eight months I have had many discussions with all four health and human services secretaries to determine whether or not we should blend behavioral health services for New Mexicans. We all agree it is time to do it. You will hear from them shortly.

The new policy impacts all state agencies that receive state or federal funds for substance abuse and mental health services: the Human Services Department, the Department of Health, the Children Youth and Families Department, the Aging and Long-term Care Department, the department of Finance and Administration's DWI programs, the department of Corrections and the state Department of Education.

We will establish a single entity to administer behavioral health services. This policy change will mean -- better services, better access for consumers and providers, and better use of taxpayers money.

I know it means change. I know it means re-structuring the way we currently provide services, but that is ok. It is time to do what is best for all New Mexicans who need these services. And, that is -- by coordinating

