



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

For immediate release  
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### **Governor Bill Richardson announces improved Immunization rates**

*Immunization rate increases to 71 percent; New Mexico moves to 43<sup>rd</sup> in Nation*

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson announced today that results of the National Immunization Survey to be released soon show that New Mexico is gaining ground in its battle to get children immunized and improve the state's overall rates. The survey will show that New Mexico has gone from 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation with a rate of 64.6 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months vaccinated to 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation with a rate of 70 percent.

"I have made improving immunization rates one of my administration's top priorities," Gov. Richardson said. "In one year we raised the public's awareness about the importance of children vaccinations. I'm confident by the time the next survey is conducted our rates will show even more improvement."

First Lady Barbara Richardson is working hard to improve the immunization rate. The First Lady is the honorary chairwoman of the New Mexico Immunization Coalition, an organization made up of private and public partners all dedicated to getting children immunized.

“In this past year, many organizations have united their resources and efforts to raise New Mexico’s immunization rates. While we still have a long way to go - 43<sup>rd</sup> in the country is not acceptable - we are moving rapidly forward to address the welfare of all New Mexicans,” Mrs. Richardson said.

Secretary of Health Patricia Montoya said she is pleased with the gain the state has made but reminded everyone that much more work is needed to ensure the safety of the state’s children.

“I won’t be satisfied until more children in our state are protected against deadly childhood diseases,” Secretary Montoya said.

The state is developing a statewide immunization registry that allows providers to simply look up a child’s record and know what shots they had, and what shots they need. Senate Bill 203, currently before the Legislature and sponsored by Sen. Linda Lopez, would create such a registry.

The Richardson Administration has taken a number of steps to increase public awareness about the importance of immunizing children, including:

- Former First Lady Rosalyn Carter and Betty Bumpers, of Done by One, a national immunization program, visited our state, at the invitation of First Lady Barbara Richardson, to highlight this important issue.
- The Department developed a “passport”, which was distributed to health care providers in late August, that parents keep with them to have a current shot record until the registry is brought on line.
- First Lady Barbara Richardson spearheaded the New Mexico Immunization Coalition.
- Governor Richardson provided \$300,000 to increase immunization coverage across the state, including outreach programs along New Mexico’s border with Mexico; hiring team nurses to focus on areas where immunization rates are the lowest; and increasing spending for people involved in the Women, Infants and Children program.
- The Department provided free immunization for children through the Shots for Tots to Teens, an initiative of the NM Primary Care Association, KOAT-TV, and many partners.
- A Senior Immunization Outreach initiative was unveiled at the Conference on Aging, Aug. 19-21 at Glorietta.
- The First Lady and the Department sponsored a State fair event that drew public attention to the fact that immunizations are important.

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