



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson, legislators announce Responsible Medicaid package

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson and legislative leaders today announced their support for a package of bills that rein in the growth of the Medicaid budget, while maintaining eligibility for more than 400,000 children and disabled adults.

Governor Richardson delivered the following remarks during a news conference:

Good afternoon and thanks for joining us today to discuss one of the most important programs in the state, Medicaid. Medicaid is a safety net for the most vulnerable of New Mexicans. Some 408,000 low-income, children and disabled adults rely on Medicaid services for their health care. However, the cost of the program, as we all know, is growing at a rate the state cannot afford. Over the last several years, hospital and nursing home rates have increased several times.

We have to rein in the costs. We have to make the tough decisions today so that we do not face a time in the near future when we are forced to eliminate thousands from coverage.

I have worked with the legislative leadership to put together a package of bills that accomplishes my two goals: control costs and maintain eligibility. Sacrifices need to be made. But, eligibility is protected and the safety net is intact.

Passage of this entire package is critical to maintaining a balanced budget. I have made it clear that I will not accept a Medicaid package that does not include the cost savings and revenue enhancements necessary to limit growth.

Today I am pleased to be joined by both the House and Senate leadership to support this package that includes revenue enhancements to ensure the thousands of people's health care coverage continues. Following our discussions, we have come to agreement on this bill package to make Medicaid work.

We have agreed together to an overall Medicaid budget that ensures no one, especially the 267,000 children, lose eligibility. The Medicaid package we are outlining today not only protects the safety net for New Mexicans, but also will fight fraud and abuse, and get the best prescription drug prices for Medicaid clients.

I'm going to ask Secretary Pam Hyde of the Human Services Department to detail the bills and explain how they are essential in providing health care coverage for New Mexico's Medicaid recipients. Then I'll ask Senate President Richard Romero and House Speaker Ben Lujan to say a little something about their support of the Medicaid package.

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