



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Governor

For Immediate Release

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Plans to Restore Funding for Drug Treatment Programs, HIV/AIDS Programs

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today directed Health Secretary Pat Montoya to restore funding for drug treatment programs in Rio Arriba County and Northern Santa Fe County. A new interagency team, including the Governor's Behavioral Health and Drug Czars, will implement a strategy for directly tackling heroin addiction in Northern New Mexico.

Governor Richardson also directed Secretary Montoya to direct \$2.6 million in HIV/AIDS funding.

Governor Richardson delivered the following prepared remarks:

Last month, I appointed professionals to oversee and manage our efforts to crack down on alcohol and drug abuse, and to coordinate the resources we dedicate to mental health care. Today, I'm putting those Czars to work - to finally get a grip on drug and alcohol abuse in Rio Arriba County and Northern Santa Fe County.

Here's what we're doing:

1. I have directed Health Secretary Pat Montoya to find and invest **\$940,000** to support efforts in Rio Arriba County for substance abuse services. This region, known as Region 2, stood to lose that funding as a result of changes in the way we pay for behavioral health and substance abuse statewide. But I'm insisting that Region 2 continues to get that funding next year. But like the one-time federal funding we secured last year, I'm also insisting on real results. I want new and innovative options for achieving those results - particularly in the area of substance abuse. And we'll hold providers accountable for providing those results.
2. As you know, we're changing the way we purchase and deliver behavioral health services in New Mexico. We will spend our money better, have more oversight of money and programs and now that I have hired Leslie Tremaine, my Behavioral Health Czar, we have a person who will focus on only this area.
3. Finally, we're creating a new interagency team staffed by Leslie Tremaine and Herman Silva, the Drug Czar, to deal directly with heroin reduction in Rio Arriba and Northern Santa Fe Counties. The team will have an office in Chimayo so they will have a physical presence in the community and to offer access. This team will report directly to me. It will focus on a combination of law enforcement, treatment and prevention.

HIV-AIDS Funding

I have also directed Secretary Montoya to immediately explore options for reinstating 2.6-million dollars into the HIV-AIDS budget. I already added 250-thousand dollars as stop-gap funding. Now, I want assurances that these programs will continue to serve vulnerable HIV and AIDS patients throughout the next budget year. I expect Secretary Montoya to report back to me very soon with immediate funding solutions.

I understand all state agencies are making tough budget decisions. I asked all my cabinet secretaries to streamline administration and save money. That means a new focus and re-designing programs. However, because the substance abuse and HIV-AIDS issues are a priority - I do not want funding in those programs to change this year.

Secretary Montoya will continue to work with the POZ Coalition, my AIDS Task Force, the AIDS community and providers to meet over the next year to figure out how budget shortfalls impact the program and what can be done to make sure clients will not lose services.