



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson announces results of Nursing home evaluations

Governor Richardson directs cabinet agencies to work together to protect Senior Citizens

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced the results of anonymous care evaluations conducted at three New Mexico nursing homes. The preliminary findings from those evaluations have resulted in immediate jeopardy citations by the Department of Health in the case of one of those homes.

As a result of the preliminary findings, Governor Richardson directed an aggressive partnership between the Aging & Long-Term Services Department, the Department of Health, the Human Services Department, the Children, Youth and Families Department, and the Taxation and Revenue Department. This historic alignment will be directed to protect the health and safety of our senior citizens, to root out fraud and to vigorously pursue all remedies possible to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation in New Mexico Nursing homes.

“I will not allow any business that is receiving state money to slide on its obligations to the health and safety of its customers,” Governor Bill Richardson said. “I especially will not allow businesses to renege on basic services when they care for New Mexico’s most vulnerable population. Let me emphasize, my administration has zero tolerance for elder abuse.”

Over the last several months the Aging & Long-Term Services Department conducted nursing home anonymous care evaluations in the Buena Vista Nursing Home in Clovis, the Ruidoso Care Center in Ruidoso and El Centro Villa Nursing Home in Albuquerque.

The Department of Health has issued current immediate jeopardy citations for the Buena Vista Nursing Home. The state Aging & Long-Term Services Department has requested Buena Vista be placed in receivership, and Governor Richardson is directing the Department of Health to rapidly conclude an investigation to determine if receivership is warranted.

In the case of the other two facilities, Governor Richardson is requiring these departments to continue their investigations and evaluate whether conditions warrant immediate jeopardy citations or other sanctions or interventions.

Governor Richardson has taken several steps to protect residents, including:

1. The Patient Care Monitoring Act, better known as the Granny Cam Act, which allows residents of nursing homes to place surveillance cameras in their rooms. The cameras will act as a deterrent against theft and abuse. Because these cameras can be so useful in assuring that residents are treated well, Governor Richardson directed the Aging and Long-Term Services Department to find a way to purchase cameras so they can be loaned out to people who cannot afford them.
2. Governor Richardson ordered an audit of nursing homes that will get underway within weeks. The state will soon understand how nursing homes can collect more than \$400 million in private and public funds and still provide tight-fisted services. That works out to about \$67,000 for each resident - or \$5,000 a month - in a nursing home.
3. Governor Richardson also signed into law a bill that gives the ombudsman program better access to records, so they can conduct investigations into the care of nursing home residents, as well as the Health Facility Oversight bill, which requires greater reporting by nursing homes and other health facilities to the Department of Health. In addition, rules have been adopted that allow the Aging & Long-Term Services Department to fine facilities for willful interference with the Ombudsman program or for retaliation by facilities against persons who report complaints to the Ombudsman.

Governor Richardson urged New Mexicans to call the Long-Term Care Ombudsman at 1-866-842-9230 if they have any concerns about nursing home residents and their care.

“New Mexico can and will deny Medicaid funding to nursing homes if they fail to provide reimbursable services,” Governor Bill Richardson said. “We will hold these facilities financially responsible, and we will hold them accountable for delivering appropriate care.”

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