



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

For Immediate Release
December 12, 2005

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New Report Highlights New Mexico's Progress in Key Health Rankings

Gains in Child Immunization, Smoking Rates Noted; Governor Richardson's Year of the Child Agenda Will Address Further Challenges

(Santa Fe, NM) – A new national health care report issued today notes New Mexico's high immunization coverage with 83.5 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving complete immunizations. After ranking near the bottom in the nation in 2002, New Mexico is currently ranked 15th in the nation for childhood immunization rates. This data was included in the United Health Foundation's 2005 America's Health Rankings Report, released today.

First Lady Barbara Richardson has spearheaded New Mexico's efforts to improve child immunization rates.

"I am proud that New Mexico is being recognized for the enormous efforts we have made to protect our children from preventable diseases," said First Lady Barbara Richardson. "But I won't be satisfied until every child is immunized. These latest health rankings show both the progress that we have made and what still must be done during the Year of the Child."

This year's health rankings by the United Health Foundation also reflect the strides New Mexico is making in reducing adult smoking and childhood poverty rates as well as fighting violent crime. New Mexico saw a decrease in its rate of adult smokers, from 22 percent in 2004 to 20.3 percent in 2005, the state's childhood poverty rate improved from 26.9 in 2004 to 23.4 in 2005, and violent crime offenses per 100,000 in population decreased to 687 from 740 last year.

Gov. Bill Richardson's Year of the Child initiatives will address the challenges cited in the report -- high rate of uninsured population and limited access to adequate pre-natal

care. His initiatives include moving toward a New Mexico in which every child, five years or younger, is covered by health insurance and increasing access to prenatal care so pregnant women give birth to healthy babies.

"I'm convinced that my Year of the Child agenda will continue to move New Mexico's health care forward," said Governor Richardson. "Programs that protect our young people and increase access to health care are an investment in our future."

New Mexico's overall health ranking was 38th in the nation in 2005, solidifying the gains the state made from 42nd in the nation in 2002 and 44th in 1990.

"We are happy to announce that our children are better protected against vaccine-preventable diseases, and more of our adults are taking better care of their health by quitting smoking," said Department of Health Secretary Michelle Lujan Grisham. "However, we have to continue to address the barriers presented by those living in poverty in New Mexico."

The complete United Health Foundation 2005 America's Health Rankings Report is available here: <http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org>

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