



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

News Release

First Lady Barbara Richardson Announces Improved Childhood Immunization Rates- New Mexico Now At 84%

State Ranks 15th in the Nation

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ALBUQUERQUE – First Lady Barbara Richardson announced today that according to the latest report from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New Mexico now ranks 15th in the nation for best childhood immunization rates. Almost 84 percent of New Mexico’s toddlers are fully immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases. Just 2 ½ years ago the state was ranked 49th.

“I am thrilled to see the progress New Mexico has made,” said First Lady Barbara Richardson. “We are closer to achieving our goal of having 100 percent of New Mexico’s children fully protected from life-threatening diseases.”

The CDC today released the latest state-by-state data for immunization rates for 19 to 35-month-olds. The First Lady made the announcement at a news conference at the Young Children’s Health Center in Albuquerque, and thanked the dedicated statewide partnership of agencies, organizations, and individuals that are responsible for this wonderful achievement:

- The New Mexico Department of Health, especially Secretary Michelle Lujan Grisham, and Dr. Steve Nickell, the department’s immunization program manager,
- Anna Levy and the New Mexico Immunization Coalition, as well as the local coalitions in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Dona Ana and Sierra County,
- The Clinical Prevention Initiative, a group of doctors from the Department of Health and in private practice. They have supported and promoted the state’s

- Done by One campaign, which encourages parents to get their children immunized with necessary vaccines by age one instead of two,
- The members of Rotary International, who have taken on immunizations as a cause in New Mexico, and
 - The Health plans in New Mexico that have become the state's partners in promoting the campaign and making sure immunizations are a priority among medical providers and parents.

“New Mexico’s immunization rates were unacceptable and many of our children were at risk before Governor Richardson and the First Lady made childhood immunizations a top priority,” said Michelle Lujan Grisham, Department of Health Secretary. “This new ranking proves what our state can accomplish when we work together to improve children’s lives in New Mexico.”

In April Mrs. Richardson accepted an award from the CDC on New Mexico’s behalf for having the most improved immunization rates in the country. She was also honored by the Santa Fe Immunization Coalition, one of five coalitions in New Mexico dedicated toward getting more children immunized against such diseases as pertussis and diphtheria.

New Mexico provides free vaccines to every child who needs them. People seeking immunizations for their children should contact their health-care provider or public health office.

For more information about the New Mexico Department of health’s immunization programs, contact Deborah Davis (505) 827-2619. Information regarding vaccine requirements, schedules and safety, is available on the Department of Health’s immunization website, www.health.state.nm.us/immunize.