



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson Urges Quick Federal Action To Provide Critical Medicaid Services To Hurricane Survivors

Governor supports bipartisan proposal to cut red tape

SANTA FE-Governor Bill Richardson today urged the federal government to act quickly to respond to the healthcare needs of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina by cutting the red tape delaying access to critical Medicaid services.

Governor Richardson issued the following statement:

“We can afford no more delay.

Governors have learned over the years that when we need rapid assistance from the federal government, it won't work unless the infrastructure is already in place.

Establishing new bureaucracies, processes, and red tape only hinders the arrival of relief efforts. And, it makes the federal government less responsive to the patients, providers, the public, and states as a whole.

Given the recent experience in getting help to those affected by Hurricane Katrina, and the Governors' experience with federal health care waivers, we know that bureaucracy, red tape, and delays have thwarted assistance and positive outcomes all too frequently. We need to build upon what we know works. Right now, for Katrina survivors' health care needs, that program is Medicaid.

We need to get 100% federal funding to the affected states immediately. We want to eliminate any delays in getting care to the needy. We want to eliminate any disincentives for states to act. We want to eliminate any delays or disincentives for providers to care for survivors. We do not want to bankrupt states that are already challenged not just in terms of health care costs but in terms of their budgets as a whole. We need to remove all barriers to people getting care.

I am heartened by the bipartisan effort by Senators Grassley and Baucus to quickly to build upon an infrastructure that we know works and can quickly deliver health care to all Katrina survivors, no matter where they land.

Let's come together now and show the American public that we can do this right, rather than through a partisan, ideological and arbitrary system that will only further delay help for the needy families. Bureaucratic mismanagement has already failed these survivors and cost some their lives. We cannot make that mistake again.

I call on my former House colleagues and the President to show that they too can come together, as the Senate has done, to pass bipartisan health care relief legislation built on a program that works and will rapidly deliver needed care to those in need. We can afford no more delay.”

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