



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

**REVISED**

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## **Governor Richardson Takes Action to Close Uninsured Gap in New Mexico**

### *Joins Legislative Leadership in Calling for Comprehensive Health Care Solution*

(Santa Fe, NM) -- Governor Bill Richardson today announced a five point plan to help extend health care coverage to more New Mexicans. This plan builds upon the effort Governor Richardson took during the last legislative session to make sure that every New Mexico child, five and younger, has access to health care coverage.

“Today we are making another huge step forward,” said Governor Richardson. “These are immediate steps and longer term solutions to cover the nearly 400,000 New Mexicans who currently do not have health insurance. Uninsured New Mexicans are at tremendous risk and the effect of uncompensated care on our health care system is profound. We can’t wait for the federal government to solve this issue, we have to act now.”

The Governor’s five point plan includes:

- 1.** Phase in a requirement that companies that do business with the state must offer health insurance benefits to their New Mexico employees. The General Services Department will lead a small group of cabinet secretaries to develop a plan that will institute this requirement by fiscal year 2008. This group will be sensitive to the needs of small vendors.
- 2.** The General Services Department will pinpoint the number of state employees who decline health coverage. Currently, if an employee declines enrollment, the state does not check to see if they have coverage through a spouse or another entity. This full accounting will help get an accurate picture of the coverage gaps and target outreach to get as many state employees covered as possible.
- 3.** Maximize the Medicaid program. For fiscal year 2008, Governor Richardson will seek funding to increase coverage for adults via a two-year, phased-in approach. This initiative will be specifically designed to help low income adults up to 100% of the federal poverty level. It will leverage millions of dollars in additional federal funding and help cover tens of thousands of New Mexicans.

4. Funding to expand the State Coverage Insurance program to help cover more working adults and asking the federal government to raise the federal poverty requirement to 300% with cost-sharing based on income. Expanding this public/private partnership with small employers will help cover the many hardworking New Mexicans who currently cannot afford insurance.

5. Governor Richardson and the legislative leadership have appointed a **23-member** task force to analyze health coverage models and make recommendations on across-the-board coverage solutions for New Mexicans. This *Coverage for New Mexicans Committee* will have broad membership from the health care industry, insurance and advocacy communities (list attached.) This committee will deliver its findings to the Governor in a year, in time to work with the legislature on a comprehensive health coverage package for the 2008 session.

“There are some good ideas emerging at the state level,” said Governor Richardson. “States like Massachusetts and Michigan have taken aggressive action to cover more citizens. However, New Mexico has unique needs that make a one-size-fits-all solution problematic. This committee will help find solutions that will work in our unique state.”

This plan builds upon the Richardson Administration’s efforts over the past three years to close New Mexico’s uninsured gap. Following the last legislative session, Governor Richardson signed:

- **Senate Bill 267** to help the Human Services Department provide medical or premium assistance to uninsured children who are not otherwise Medicaid eligible
- **House Bill 24** to give employers more health insurance options for employees through both the Health Insurance Alliance and state or federal agencies offering health insurance coverage

Accepted Participants for the *Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee*

CATEGORY	NAME	ORGANIZATION
<b>House Members</b>	James Madalena	House
	Danice Picraux	House
	Brian Moore	House
<b>Senate Members</b>	Dede Feldman	Senate
	Carroll Leavell	Senate
	Mary Jane Garcia	Senate
<b>Health Care Advocate</b>	Charlotte Roybal	Health Action NM
<b>Uninsured</b>	April Redbird, LMSW	Affirmations Counseling Center
<b>Division of Insurance</b>	Mike Batte	NM Public Regulation Commission
<b>Insurance Industry</b>	David Scrase, M.D.	Presbyterian Health Plan
	Craig Keyes, M.D.	United Healthcare
<b>Employers</b>	Alfredo Vigil, M.D.	El Centro Family Health (formerly Health Centers of Northern NM)
	Duane Trythall	Excel Staffing Companies
	Dennis S. Peña, R.P.H.	Pharmacist, Retired
	Paul Sowards	Bank of Albuquerque
<b>Nonprofit</b>	Michelle Melendez	St. Joseph’s Community Health Services
<b>Labor</b>	Robin Gould	Communications Workers of America
	Carter Bundy	AFSCME
<b>Hospital Representative</b>	Steve Altmiller	San Juan Regional Medical Center

<b>Provider/ Physician</b>	James Tryon, M.D.	NM Medical Society
	Charlie Alfero	Hidalgo Medical Services
<b>Human Services Department</b>	Pam Hyde	Secretary
<b>CHAIR</b>	Diane Denish	Lt Governor
<b>Staff</b>	Raul Burciaga	Legislative Council Service
<b>Staff</b>	Ruby Ann M. Esquibel	Human Services Department

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