



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

For Immediate Release
October 11, 2006

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Initiative to Fight Substance Abuse

FARMINGTON – Governor Bill Richardson today announced that during the upcoming 2007 legislative session he will seek \$3 million to support comprehensive community programs to fight substance abuse in New Mexico. The Governor made the announcement this morning during a news conference in Farmington. Under this initiative, the state’s Behavioral Health Collaborative- representing 17 state agencies and the Governor’s Office- will accept proposals and award funding to one to three communities with the most effective plans.

“Every community in New Mexico has a chance to apply for this funding to help their efforts to fight the devastating effects of substance abuse. I am calling for a total community approach,” said Governor Richardson. “This initiative encourages local communities to come to the table with their own resources- funding, facilities, or existing programs- and apply for funding that can help pull it all together.”

Depending on their unique needs, communities can apply for funding to help create a new detox program, an intensive outpatient program, crisis intervention teams and/or training for local law enforcement. The Governor will direct the Collaborative to select communities with the highest need and the best plan.

“Substance abuse is a scourge that threatens our communities, our families, and most importantly, our children,” added the Governor. “And it’s not limited to alcohol abuse and DWI, or methamphetamine. We’re also talking about heroin, cocaine, and marijuana. And the fact is that nearly 60 percent of DWI offenders with two or more convictions are abusing more than one drug, and/or also suffer from mental health problems. Law enforcement plays a big role, but we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. Treatment is critical, but we cannot treat our way out of it either. The approach must be comprehensive, focusing on three important strategies- prevention, treatment, and law enforcement.”

The Governor’s initiative will help create a community-wide solution that will require the participation of counties and local governments, local behavioral health collaboratives, DWI Councils, tribal governments, community health councils, the courts, legislators and state agencies.

The Governor also plans to call upon private foundations and the business community to help leverage this initial funding into broader financial support.

In August Governor Richardson announced a major, \$6.5 million, investment in curbing the problem of meth addiction in New Mexico. The plan comprehensively addresses the range of services needed to fight meth and treat meth addiction. The \$6.5 million plan calls for \$3.4 million in operation funds and \$3.1 million in capital investments.

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