



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



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Governor Richardson Signs Off Reservation Native American Health Bill

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today signed House Bill 236 - Off Reservation Native American Health. HB 236 is a critical piece of legislation affecting New Mexico's Native American population living outside of reservations.

"I am furthering my commitment to advance Native American causes," said Governor Richardson. "While the Bush administration is trying to cut funding for Indian health programs across the country – today I signed HB 236 - a bold initiative that will help ensure a healthy future for off-reservation Native Americans in our state."

HB 236 unites tribal and off-reservation communities, tribal leaders, off-reservation health care advocates, Indian health providers, and non-profit organizations.

"This bill is an important step toward better addressing the unique and pressing health care needs of all the Indian people in New Mexico, living both on and off-reservation," said New Mexico Indian Affairs Cabinet Secretary Alvin Warren. "The State of New Mexico continues to demonstrate its leadership in taking measures to improve the health of our Indian citizens while, at the same time, pushing the federal government to live up to its trust obligations."

This bill creates a clear and explicit voice for urban Indian health by establishing an Off-Reservation Native American Health Commission in Bernalillo County - where the largest concentration of off-reservation Indians live - and will serve as a single planning and advocacy entity to make substantive recommendations by:

- Collecting and analyzing data specific to the off-reservation Native American community.
- Identifying gaps in health care services and coverage for urban Indians.
- Allowing one of the largest and most diverse urban Indian communities in the United States to set the standard and become a model for other similar entities around the nation.

HB 236 was sponsored by Representative Mimi Stewart.

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