



PRESS RELEASE

January 8, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Sharon Kayne, Communications Director, New Mexico Voices for Children
505-244-9505 ext. 30 (p), 505-401-8709 (c), 505-244-9509 (f), skayne@nmvoices.org
OR: Tara Ford, Co-Director, Pegasus Legal Services for Children
505-244-1101 (p), 505-362-2488 (c)

Medicaid cuts would devastate state's most vulnerable children

Group to urge Governor, Legislature not to reduce deficit on the backs of vulnerable kids

ALBUQUERQUE—Several child welfare experts, child advocates, attorneys, and citizens will speak on the importance of Medicaid funding for children, particularly those in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The group, which will speak at a **press conference at Hotel Albuquerque at 10am today**, wants the Governor and Legislature to know that they are united in their support of fully funding Medicaid.

"We understand the enormity of the budget deficit that state lawmakers are dealing with," said Tara Ford, Co-Director for Pegasus Legal Services for Children, "but we urge them not to reduce spending on critical services for children. Children suffer in the short term and everyone suffers in the long term."

New Mexico's economy would also suffer from under-funding Medicaid because the federal matching dollars deliver much-needed new economic activity to the state. And the match is likely to increase.

"Congress is considering raising the federal Medicaid match as part of its economic recovery package," said Bill Jordan, Policy Director for NM Voices for Children. "So if we cut Medicaid, we cut the vehicle by which Congress will funnel economic recovery money to the state. If we cut Medicaid, we cut our federal economic relief." Jordan will be one of four people to speak at the press conference.

Jordan will provide some alternatives for covering the state budget deficit at the press conference. "There are numerous opportunities for raising revenues that don't hurt our most vulnerable citizens," he said. "We can close some of the loopholes in our tax code and tap our rainy day funds, for example."

The group will speak during a break at the 16th Annual Children's Law Institute. Their views are their own and do not reflect those of the Institute.

A Statement of Support for Fully Funding Medicaid, which is signed by the speakers and other advocates, is attached as a pdf.

###

New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.
2340 Alamo SE, Suite 120, Albuquerque, NM 87106-3523; 505-244-9505 (p); www.nmvoices.org