



NM Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **PRESS CONFERENCE TO RELEASE FIRST-EVER KIDS COUNT REPORT ON STATUS OF CHILDREN IN BORDER COMMUNITIES**

**Wednesday, February 9, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.  
Las Cruces High School, North Commons Area  
1755 El Paseo Road, Las Cruces**

#### **Speakers Include:**

**William Mattiace, Mayor of Las Cruces  
Luis Martinez, Superintendent, Las Cruces Public Schools  
Bert Garrett, M.D., Director, Southern New Mexico Residency Program  
Sara Beth Koplik, Ph.D., Kids Count Project Manager, New Mexico Voices for Children  
Howard Spiegelman, Executive Director, New Mexico Assembly  
on School-Based Health Care**

**Poverty A Major Challenge to Health and Well-Being of Children Along Border;**

**School-Based Health Centers Key To Increasing Access to Quality Health Care**

Las Cruces – In New Mexico, Latino and non-Latino children living in border communities face greater challenges due to poverty than do children in the state as a whole, according to a first-of-its-kind report, "Kids Count – A Snapshot of Children on the New Mexico Border", released by New Mexico Voices for Children.

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The report documents for the first time the conditions of children living in the border counties of Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Otero and Sierra. New Mexico's border counties are home to 17% (312,200) of the state's population.

The report "documents the adverse impacts of poverty among children living in border communities," said Sara Beth Koplik, Project Manager of Kids Count of New Mexico Voices for Children. "But", she continued, "it also contains heartening news. Some of the border counties studied have lower numbers of low birth-weight infants than the state average, for example.

The report recommends, among other things, improvement of access to primary and basic health services for children in border communities. Howard Spiegelman, Executive Director of the New Mexico Assembly on School-Based Health Care notes that "School-based health centers are a proven model for bringing health care to where children and adolescents are: in the schools" and cites school-based health centers as a key part of an effective health care delivery system.

There are currently thirty-four school-based health centers in New Mexico, including four in the Las Cruces area. Governor Richardson is committed to doubling the number of these centers, including within border communities.

*Border KIDS COUNT* is sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the nation's most authoritative source of comprehensive, timely and relevant data on child well-being.

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