

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, February 4, 2011

CONTACT: Sharon Kayne, skayne@nmvoices.org
505-244-9505 x30; 505-410-8709 (cell)

Local Group Receives Grant to Help State Extend Health Coverage to More Kids *Packard Foundation Cites NM Voices for Children's Critical Role in Recent Progress*

Albuquerque—New Mexico Voices for Children announced today that it has been selected to receive a \$120,000 grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation under the Foundation's Insuring America's Children: Getting to the Finish Line initiative. The grant will support NM Voices in its work to advance policies and best practices that can help extend health care coverage to more New Mexico children and their families. The announcement was made today to coincide with the two-year anniversary of the reauthorization of the federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

"New Mexico Voices for Children has helped to deliver real wins for New Mexico children, and because New Mexico has strengthened Medicaid and CHIP, thousands of New Mexico children can get the care they need," said Carol S. Larson, president and CEO of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

This is the first grant the child advocacy organization has received from the Packard Foundation. "We're very pleased to have been selected," said NM Voices Board Chair Anne Simpson, M.D. "Ensuring that more children can get health coverage has been a big part of our work for many years, and this investment shows great faith by the Foundation in our ability to make a difference."

New Mexico has made significant progress in recent years in enrolling uninsured children in health coverage. The state Human Services Department recently improved coverage for children through a set of cost-effective policy and practice changes, including:

- Adopting regulations allowing for continuous Medicaid eligibility for children. The 319,000 low-income New Mexican children currently enrolled in Medicaid will now be deemed automatically eligible for 12 months of coverage, guaranteeing that they will retain their benefits for a full year regardless of changes in their family's income;
- Removing the five-year waiting period for lawfully residing immigrant children and pregnant women to receive Medicaid; and
- Eliminating in-person interview requirements.

As a result of these changes, the state received an \$8.5 million performance bonus from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). These improvements have helped thousands of New Mexico families to ensure that children get the care they need.

"New Mexico has shown that we can solve the problem of children not having health insurance coverage," said Bill Jordan, policy director at New Mexico Voices for Children. "And our kids, our families, and our state are stronger as a result. This grant and new federal tools and resources can help New Mexico reach the finish line and cover every uninsured child."

NM Voices will be receiving policy and communications support from the Georgetown Center for Children and Families (CCF), an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center based at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute.

Since 2007, the Packard Foundation's Insuring America's Children: States Leading the Way grantmaking strategy has invested in state-based children's health advocacy organizations. Advocates in nine other states also received 2011 Finish Line grant awards.

"This is a tough budget year, but it'll be even tougher for New Mexico families struggling to stay afloat through the worst economy in decades," said Jordan. "Now, we must keep moving forward to improve delivery of health care services and make the system even more efficient than ever. If leaders in Santa Fe choose to maintain their bipartisan commitment to covering uninsured kids, we can keep children healthy and families strong," he added.

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The David and Lucile Packard Foundation is a private family foundation created in 1964 by David Packard (1912–1996), cofounder of the Hewlett-Packard Company, and Lucile Salter Packard (1914–1987). The Foundation provides grants to nonprofit organizations in the following program areas: Conservation and Science; Population and Reproductive Health; and Children, Families, and Communities. The Foundation makes national and international grants and also has a special focus on the Northern California Counties of San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. Foundation grantmaking includes support for a wide variety of activities including direct services, research and policy development, and public information and education. The Foundation does not make grants intended to influence legislation or support candidates for political office. Foundation grant awards totaled approximately \$234 million in 2010. The Foundation expects grantmaking awards of up to \$232 million in 2011.