



PRESS RELEASE

March 13, 2007

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12am, March 14, 2007

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

Analysis: NM's Low-Income Parents Losing Health Benefits Faster

ALBUQUERQUE—New analysis released today shows that, over the last decade, low-income families have been losing employer-sponsored health coverage three times faster than high-income families. Nationally, only 47% of parents with low and moderate incomes (\$40,000 or less for a family of four) are offered health insurance by their employer, while 78% of parents earning \$80,000 or more have this critical benefit.

The vast majority of New Mexico's uninsured children – 85,000 or 70% – live in families with low and moderate incomes. An even higher percentage of uninsured children – 84% – live in a household where someone works full-time.

“The steady loss of health insurance benefits through employers underscores the importance of our government's role in helping parents keep their children healthy so they can reach their full potential,” said Bill Jordan, Policy Director for NM Voices for Children.

Most of the state's uninsured children are likely eligible for free or low-cost health coverage through either Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), both of which rely heavily on federal funding. Created in 1997, SCHIP is due for reauthorization this year.

“Congress has a unique opportunity this year with S-Chip to fill in the health insurance gap for children whose working parents can't count on their employers for health benefits,” said Jordan. “New Mexico's congressional delegation will play an important role in the reauthorization of this critical program.”

The *New York Times* called for support of the program in an editorial in Monday's paper. “Medicaid and S-Chip have been remarkably effective in reducing the number of uninsured children while the number of uninsured adults keeps increasing,” wrote the *Times* editors. “That is a success worth building on, not diminishing,” they concluded

www.nytimes.com/2007/03/12/opinion/12mon1.html?_r=1&n=Top%2fOpinion%2fEditorials%20and%20Op%2dEd%2fEditorials&oref=slogin).

The study was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy devoted to improving health and health care (www.rwjf.org/). To read the whole report, go to www.covertheuninsured.org.

###

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; 505-244-9505 (p); www.nmvoices.org