



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Town Hall to Focus on Crisis in Health Care Coverage

ALBUQUERQUE—The current health-care crisis in America is as worrisome as it is complex. So several advocacy organizations are calling a town hall to address the myriad health-care issues and inform the public debate. **The Crisis in Health Care and the New Congress** is Nov. 9, and will include a panel of state and federal experts. They will take questions from a moderator as well as members of the audience.

Because of recent congressional budget cuts and the continued erosion of employer-sponsored health-care coverage, fewer and fewer Americans are now able to get the health care they need. By slashing funding for Medicaid, Congress has seen to it that countless children, disabled adults and elderly folks are now denied medical treatment.

When a new Congress convenes early next year, they'll debate reauthorization of another health-care safety net – the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Created ten years ago, SCHIP currently insures about 12,000 children and 4,000 working adults in New Mexico who are not eligible for Medicaid.

Not only is the program essential to our children, it is critical to the current debate about a universal health care system in New Mexico. How much money the state has to spend on a universal health plan will depend in part on how Congress funds SCHIP and continues funding Medicaid. The more money the feds invest in health care, the better the chance New Mexico can create a plan for covering everyone.

Town Hall panel members include Bruce Lesley, president of First Focus and former health policy aide to Sen. Bingaman; Katie Falls, the deputy secretary of NM Human Services Dept.; and Bob Greenberg, a retired pediatrician who helped lay the groundwork for SCHIP.

WHAT: *The Crisis in Health Care and the New Congress Town Hall*

WHEN: Thursday, Nov. 9, 2007, 6pm to 8pm

WHERE: Smith Brasher Hall (southwest corner of Coal and University SE, Albuquerque), room SB-100, on the CNM campus (formerly TVI)

HOW MUCH: Admission is free, RSVP requested (RSVP online at nmvoices.org)

WHO: Sponsored by NM Voices for Children, Bernalillo County Community Health Council, Molina Healthcare, Southwest Improvement Council, St. Joseph Community Health, NM Pediatric Society, NM Human Needs Coordinating Council, Lutheran Office of Government Ministries, Health Action NM, Health Care for All, Envision New Mexico and CNM.

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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.
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