



## PRESS RELEASE

November 9, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Child Advocacy Group Receives \$200,000 Robert Wood Johnson Grant Funding to support work on early childhood care, health, and education**

ALBUQUERQUE—New Mexico Voices for Children has been awarded a *Roadmaps to Health* Community Grant of \$200,000 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to improve the long-term health and well-being of New Mexico’s children.

The grant funding supports New Mexico Voices for Children in its collaboration with the Invest in Kids Now! coalition and the New Mexico Community Data Collaborative network. The multi-level project has several long- and short-term goals. One is to educate grassroots groups about the importance of early childhood care, education, and health to K-12 educational success. The groups will then be provided with location-specific data on health disparities, unmet needs, and gaps in services so the communities can advocate for their specific needs with policy-makers. The end goal is to secure an adequate, stable source of funding for a continuum of high-quality early childhood services either via the state’s Land Grant Permanent Fund or other potential revenue sources.

The 12 *Roadmaps to Health* Community Grants, which support two-year state and local efforts among policymakers, business, education, health care, public health, and community organizations, will be managed by Community Catalyst and are part of the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program, a collaboration of RWJF and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI).

“These projects are really exciting for two reasons: first, they are truly collaborations among diverse community partners who bring expertise, relationships and resources to improve people’s health; and second, that in addition to health behaviors such as smoking and diet, they are focused on factors such as education, family relationships, and income that heavily influence our health and quality of life,” said James S. Marks, MD, MPH, senior vice president and director of the Health Group at RWJF.

“One thing that makes this grant particularly valuable to us is that it allows us to expand our work in early childhood care and education to include the very important issue of health,” said Bill Jordan, NM Voices’ Policy Director. “Access to good prenatal care and ongoing preventive health care is vital to a young child’s future success. When developmental delays

or health problems are not diagnosed and addressed early they can impede a child's social and educational progress and have negative life-long consequences," Jordan added.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation will provide a cash match to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant.

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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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#### **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable and timely change. For nearly 40 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

#### **About Community Catalyst**

Community Catalyst is a national nonprofit consumer advocacy organization dedicated to quality affordable health care for all. Community Catalyst works in partnership with national, state and local organizations, policymakers, and foundations, providing leadership and support to improve the health of communities and to change the health care system so it serves everyone. For more information, visit [www.communitycatalyst.org](http://www.communitycatalyst.org) or <http://blog.communitycatalyst.org>.