

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 17

**48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007**

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY CONTROL OF ITS MEDICAID RECERTIFICATION PROCEDURES.

WHEREAS, in May 2004, the human services department changed the way it processes medicaid recertifications and implemented "automatic closure", a practice by which the number of medicaid recipients is routinely reduced by the automatic disenrollment of participants; and

WHEREAS, automatic closure occurs when a period of medicaid certification expires and the entry of information to recertify the participant has not taken place, thereby activating a computer process that automatically disenrolls the participant; and

WHEREAS, there are many legitimate reasons why recertification information is not entered on a timely basis

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1 that are not the fault of the medicaid recipient, including  
2 caseworkers' inability to complete the paperwork due to  
3 extremely heavy caseloads, participant or caseworker illness,  
4 lost recertification paperwork and lack of understanding of the  
5 requirements of recertification; and

6 WHEREAS, with automatic closure, there is no human review;  
7 instead, a computer automatically closes a medicaid case if the  
8 paperwork is not timely processed, regardless of whether the  
9 recipient actually submitted the required paperwork; and

10 WHEREAS, when the department first implemented automatic  
11 closure, it tracked the number of families that were  
12 automatically disenrolled and found that approximately ten  
13 thousand families were disenrolled each month; and

14 WHEREAS, during the first fifteen months of automatic  
15 closure, more than one hundred twenty thousand families were  
16 automatically disenrolled from medicaid and approximately  
17 seventy-five percent of these families were subsequently  
18 reinstated, indicating that they were financially eligible all  
19 along; and

20 WHEREAS, during the first two years of automatic closure,  
21 more than thirty thousand families lost their medicaid and were  
22 not re-enrolled; and

23 WHEREAS, the automatic closure practice affects children,  
24 pregnant women and very-low-income families; and

25 WHEREAS, the resulting loss of medicaid coverage results

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1 in children missing their scheduled immunizations; babies going  
2 without medication; children missing appointments to see  
3 specialists; mothers going without prenatal care; and other  
4 interruptions in health care; and

5 WHEREAS, in June 2005, the department stopped tracking  
6 both the number of families that were automatically disenrolled  
7 each month and the number that were subsequently reinstated;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, the department does not analyze why families are  
10 terminated from their medicaid coverage nor why they are  
11 subsequently reinstated; specifically, the department has not  
12 attempted to determine whether children and families are losing  
13 their medicaid due to recipients' failure to bring in their  
14 recertification paperwork, or whether the loss of medicaid is  
15 due to the department's errors in failing to process paperwork  
16 in a timely manner; and

17 WHEREAS, the department currently conducts no quality  
18 control of its medicaid recertification procedures; and

19 WHEREAS, the department's current method of collecting  
20 case data does not capture whether recipients are experiencing  
21 a lapse in their benefits; and

22 WHEREAS, the current performance measures of the  
23 department do not include measures that capture the quality of  
24 recertification procedures or the percentage of eligible New  
25 Mexicans receiving services from the department;

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1           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department be  
3 requested to implement quality control of its medicaid  
4 recertification procedures, including the tracking of the  
5 number of cases closed and subsequently reinstated, as well as  
6 an analysis of why medicaid recipients are terminated from  
7 their health care coverage, and that the department do "point  
8 in time" tracking of the number of people on medicaid so that  
9 it can determine how many families are experiencing a lapse in  
10 their services; and

11           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department be requested to  
12 ensure that eligible medicaid recipients continue to receive  
13 medicaid coverage without a lapse and that the department  
14 resolve any problems it uncovers concerning eligible medicaid  
15 recipients experiencing a lapse in or an end to their medicaid  
16 coverage; and

17           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department be requested to  
18 report to the interim legislative health and human services  
19 committee on its findings and any corrective action taken in  
20 November 2007 and again in November 2008; and

21           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department be requested to  
22 implement performance measures that include the quality of  
23 medicaid recertification procedures and the percentage of  
24 eligible New Mexicans receiving medicaid; and

25           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

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1 transmitted to the secretary of human services and the  
2 governor.

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