

## Talking Points – Medicaid Coverage of Substance Abuse Treatment

### **New Mexicans need more substance abuse treatment**

- New Mexico ranks one of the top states in the nation for people who need but do not receive substance abuse treatment.
- New Mexico has an incredible substance abuse problem, and we are not doing enough to address this problem.
- New Mexico had the highest rate of any state of illicit drug dependence or abuse among persons aged 12 or older in 2003-2004.

### **Expanded access to substance abuse treatment will save lives, save money, and make New Mexico safer**

- Nine of the 10 leading causes of death in New Mexico are at least partially caused by alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use.
- Every dollar invested in substance abuse treatment saves taxpayers \$7.46 in societal costs, such as crime, violence, loss of productivity, etc..
- Untreated substance abuse costs our communities including violent and property crimes, prison expenses, court and criminal costs, emergency room visits, child abuse and neglect, lost child support, foster care and welfare costs, reduced productivity, unemployment, and victimization.

### **New Mexico will be joining the majority of other states in covering treatment**

- The majority of states cover substance abuse treatment under Medicaid, and New Mexico Medicaid previously covered substance abuse treatment up until 1998.
- New Mexico covered substance abuse treatment under Medicaid up until 1998 when we switched to the managed care system.
- Over 30 states currently cover substance abuse treatment under Medicaid. New Mexico would be joining the majority of states by covering substance abuse treatment under Medicaid.

### **This will not make Medicaid more expensive**

- Coverage of substance abuse treatment services should not increase overall Medicaid costs because of the cost savings in other medical expenses for those who seek and receive treatment.
- People who receive adequate treatment will see declines in hospital days, emergency department visits and outpatient visits.
- New Mexico's coverage plan could be submitted to the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, and if approved, would allow for federal matching funds.

### **A range of treatment services will be covered**

- Some treatment services to be covered under Medicaid include inpatient detox, long-term or short-term residential care, intensive outpatient and outpatient treatment, and individual and family counseling and intervention.
- Treatment would be guided by an initial assessment, screening, and treatment plan developed with a licensed provider.

### **New Mexicans support treatment**

- The Governor's Interagency Substance Abuse Task Force recommended in 2005: "Enhance use of Medicaid funding for substance abuse-related treatment services."
- The Health and Human Services Interim Legislative Committee endorsed Medicaid coverage of substance abuse treatment.
- Community organizations that support treatment include: Alianza of New Mexico, Rio Grande Foundation, NM Human Needs Coordinating Council, NM Center on Law and Poverty, Santa Fe Recovery Center, NM NAACP, NM Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless, and PB&J Family Services.