

Member
communities:

Bernalillo County
Canoncito Band of Navajo
Catron County
Chaves County
Cibola County
Curry County
Eddy County
Grant County
Guadalupe County
Harding County
Hidalgo County
Lea County
Lincoln County
Los Alamos County
Luna County
McKinley County
Mora County
Otero County
Pueblo de Cochiti
Pueblo de San Ildefonso
Quay County
Rio Arriba County
Roosevelt County
San Juan County
San Miguel County
Sandoval County
Santa Clara Pueblo
Santa Fe County
Sierra County
Socorro County
Torrance County
Union County
Valencia County

The New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils

Annual Update to the 2012 New Mexico State Legislature

Please Support SB 35

The New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils thanks you for your vision and leadership on behalf of health and well-being of New Mexico residents. We seek your support in reinstating partial funding to reestablish the New Mexico Health Council system under public funding.

New Mexico Health Council Background:

The County MCH Plan Act was passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor in March 1991. The purpose of the Act was “to encourage the development of comprehensive, community-based maternal and child health plans to meet the needs of childbearing women and their families, and thereby improve the long-term health of New Mexicans across the state.” Over the years, at the request of their communities, health councils statewide expanded their mission to include all vulnerable populations. The Act was amended by the Legislature in 2007 to specifically include tribes, as well as counties. State general funds budgeted for health councils ranged from \$1.5 million in 1991 (for 15 counties) to \$3,003,000 for 37 counties and tribes in 2010. State funding was suspended in July 2010 due to State budget cuts.

New Mexico Health Council Functions:

Health councils have served as the hub of local public health systems, performing many essential public health functions in partnership with the NM Department of Health. Health councils assess local needs, develop community health plans and priorities (which provided local input to state plans), influence policies that improve health, and have attracted significant amounts of non-DOH funding to support new programs and services in order to improve the health of New Mexicans.

New Mexico Health Council Accomplishments:

- Provided a consistent system of local input to state planning through assessment and planning documents (Community Health Improvement Profiles & Priorities and Plans).
- Identified and addressed local health priorities that aligned with the New Mexico Comprehensive Strategic Health Plan, including: access to care, substance abuse, teen pregnancy prevention, obesity, and others.
- Leveraged state government funding to access non-governmental support for new initiatives in local communities. In the past, this has been as much as \$3-4 in non-state funding for every dollar. From April 2009 to June 2010, **health councils leveraged \$3.5 million** in non-DOH funds for their communities.

New Mexico Health Council partnership with state government:

New Mexico is one of 13 states with a centralized department of health, rather than a system of county-based health departments that provide community-based health planning and coordination. Health councils have provided that function to state government since 1991! Health councils have played a central role in the system by which state government is able to accomplish the *Ten Essential Public Health Services* (National Public Health Performance Standards Program). In addition, health councils are poised to play a significant role in working with the State to coordinate and implement health care reform in all communities throughout the state.

Requesting 2012 New Mexico Legislature support:

Most health councils are struggling to continue their community work with volunteers or temporary community funding. Other councils have shut their doors, and communities no longer have that support. Minimal financial support (\$50,000 for each council totaling \$1,900,000) is being requested from the 2012 New Mexico Legislature. This funding will provide a foundation of support for councils to continue their work in partnership with state government in improving health outcomes for New Mexico residents. Especially during these hard times, councils work in improving health systems’ response to community needs while maintaining fiscal viability is essential.