

**Sierra Health Council
Meeting of the Members
June 1, 2011**

Board Members Present: Jennie Bernier, Jane Greene

Members Present: Susan Garrison, Tom Hamil, Lori C. Medina, Terri Smith, Dale Twyeffort, Valerie Two Wolves, Sara Perkins, Deborah North

Jennie Bernier opened the meeting at 11:00 am and the agenda for the meeting was approved. Members reviewed and approved the minutes of the May meeting. Jennie reported that there was written financial report because MJ is out of town but there will be a report next month. The current balance in the Health Council account is just over \$17,000.

There is still one at-large position on the Board. Current members are Jennie Bernier, Reilly Hamil, M K Dyke, Jane Greene, Sabra Alderete and Christy Conklin.

ROUNDTABLE

New Mexico Veterans Center Val Two Wolves passed out flyers for the Alzheimer's Association *Project for Veterans* and described the program that provides training for caregivers of veterans **or** veterans who are caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association would provide this program locally if the enough people enrolled.

Ministerial Alliance Dale Twyeffort reported that they had a good Easter season.

Human Services Division Lori Medina reported that HSD has a growing number of customers but no additional staff so they are busy. If they were using the caseload system, each worker would have about 700 cases; instead of this, they pool the work and so are able to process applications much more quickly. At this time it takes about 24 hours for someone to get emergency food stamps or approved for Medicare as long as their paperwork is complete. She also reported that benefits will be reduced on July 1st when the State Supplements go away. The Sierra County office was honored by being nominated for a Champion Hunger Award. They are still operating a small Food Pantry for clients who are homeless and a Clothes Closet for people going to work. Recent statistics show 1 in 5 New Mexicans are now receiving food stamps. (Lori submitted an article with this information that is appended to the minutes.

The Brain Injury Group Susan Garrison reported that the group is on hold for the summer months.

The Bountiful Alliance Susan Garrison reported that the new Kitchen Manager will be hired within the next week. The kitchen is operated as a commercial kitchen which allows local people to prepare products that they can sell. A number of classes in food safety and business skills are being offered:

Food Safety, June 6th, 12_3 pm, Instructor: Susan Garrison. This class is free and will qualify people to work in a commercial kitchen, both TBAs and restaurants).

How to Start a Business, Part 1, June 14th, 6_8 pm, Instructor: Phil Duncan. Free **Part 2**, June 21st, 6_8 pm, Instructor: Phil Duncan. \$10 **Part 3**, June 28th, 6_8 pm, Instructor: Phil Duncan. \$10

Cooking with Herbs, June 15th, 5-7 pm Instructor: Joe Kramer. \$5

Canning Classes will be held during the summer. The Farmer's Market is now open on Saturdays and will be starting up on Tuesdays at TBA as soon as more produce is available. Shandra from DVR got in touch with Susan after the meeting last month and has placed a worker with TBA to assist with the Farmer's Market.

Sierra Vista Nursing Home Sara Perkins reported that the Director of Nursing position is open. She welcomed people to visit the facility and go on a tour of the Granny Harkey unit. If you are interested, call Sara at 575-740-0836

Sierra Vista Home Health and Hospice Deborah North reported she works with people in the Nursing Home, in Assisted Living and at home. They serve people within a 100-mile radius. They currently have 98 people on Home Health and 18 in Hospice. Because of Medicaid cuts the hours of care for people are being reduced. Veterans no longer qualify for care if there is a spouse in the home even if that spouse is unable to provide care.

TOPS Jennie Bernier reported that the TOPS grant was successful and they will have \$50,000 per year for 4 years for the program. The increase in funds means they will be have 2 sites, do outreach to Arrey and increase the stipends for the youth. CONGRATULATIONS to all those who worked in the program last year and on the grant.

Housing Authority FSS Program Jennie Bernier said the USDA will visit 2 of the families that are working toward homeownership in their current homes in Family Housing. This is exciting for the families and an honor for our FSS program. She also reported that they are still waiting to hear about funding for the Smoking Cessation program and for FSS for 2012.

Submitted by: Jane Greene

1 in 5 in New Mexico receiving food stamps, Gov Martinez to end supplement program

By Rob Nikolewski on May 31, 2011

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Yes, we are a poor state.

An analysis done by [Capitol Report New Mexico](#) shows that more than one in five New Mexicans take part in the federal government's food stamps program, giving New Mexico the second-highest ratio among the 50 states and the third-highest in the US when the District of Columbia is added.

According to the latest data released by the [US Department of Agriculture](#), which oversees the food stamps program, 411,947 New Mexicans take part in what the government calls the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP). While the USDA calculates the raw numbers of people and households receiving food stamps it does not break down the numbers by percentage of the overall population.

But Capitol Report New Mexico, using population data from the US Census Bureau, analyzed all 50 states plus the District of Columbia to determine the percentage of people receiving SNAP. With a population of 2,009,671, New Mexico has a percentage of 20.5 percent on food stamps. Only DC and Mississippi have a higher percentage.

Here's the breakdown:

Highest % on SNAP	
District of Columbia	22.23
Mississippi	20.85
New Mexico	20.50
Tennessee	20.37
Oregon	20.24
Michigan	19.54
Louisiana	19.51
Kentucky	19.05
Maine	18.97
West Virginia	18.93

Lowest % on SNAP	
Wyoming	6.93
New Jersey	8.53
New Hampshire	8.61
Colorado	9.06
North Dakota	9.43
Minnesota	9.73
Nebraska	9.79
California	9.93
Utah	10.45
Kansas	10.54
National average	14.52

Judging by our calculations, New Mexico's ratio was tenth in the nation (including DC) in March of 2010 when 17.29 percent of the population was receiving food stamps so the jump to 20.5 percent indicates that the so-called recovery hasn't hit home yet.

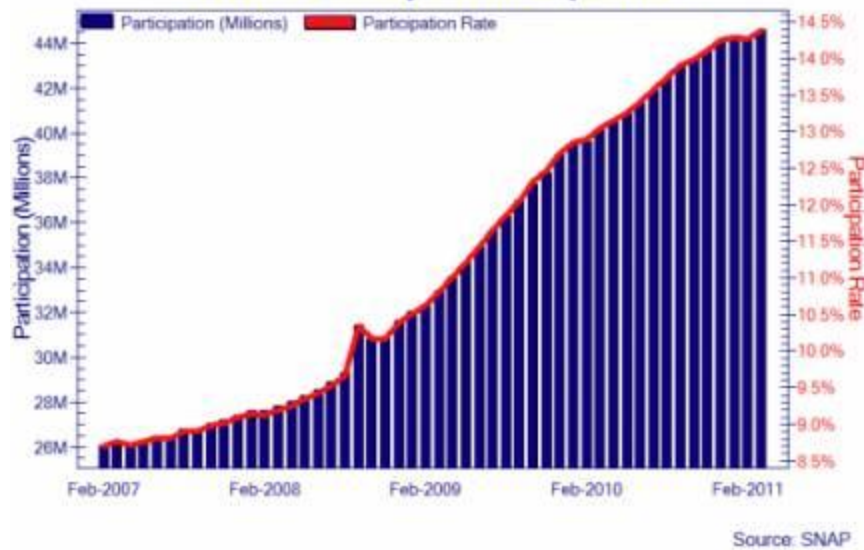
You can look at the spreadsheet we compiled here:

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=tR-nuLi9tGr6UhsGFeMLa9Q#gid=0>

Aside from the sluggish economy, another factor affecting New Mexico and every other state has been an [expansion of the food stamp program under President Obama](#). Costs have risen 39 percent since the president took office.

The program cost the government [\\$68 billion last year](#) and is running at a 10 percent higher clip this year. According to the USDA data released a few days ago, more than 44.5 million Americans now take part in the SNAP program, which is an all-time high:

Food Stamp Participation



On a related note, the administration of Gov. [Susana Martinez](#) said Tuesday (May 31) it is ending a program that supplements federal food stamp benefits for about 4,000 low-income elderly and disabled people because there's no room in the state budget. The program cost nearly a half-million dollars last year, according to a story by Associated Press. [Click here](#) for more on that story.

Update: The rising cost of the food stamp program since President Obama expanded eligibility has now caused some on Capitol Hill to call for cuts. Partisan reaction has been predictable. [Click here](#) for the story.

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