



STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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New Mexico seeks nominations for Primary Care Council *Need the right team to improve access to primary care in New Mexico*

SANTA FE – The state of New Mexico begins today accepting nominations for the Primary Care Council until Friday, May 14, 2021 announced the Human Services Department. As outlined in [House Bill 67](#) enacted during the 2021 legislative session, the Council is designed to:

- “Increase access to primary care, improve the quality of primary care services, lower the cost of primary care delivery, address the shortage of primary care providers and reduce overall health care costs” statewide.

“Given that more than 48 percent of New Mexicans receive one or more services from the Human Services Department, and now over 930,000 individuals are enrolled in Medicaid, primary care has never been more important to the state,” said Human Services Department Sec. David Scrase, M.D. “We hope to build on the success of our expansion of training positions to identify the best methods for building a sustainable primary care workforce, so that every New Mexican who desires an ongoing relationship with a primary care practitioner can have one.”

The Human Services Department is using the [National Academy of Medicine definition of primary care](#) to guide Council initiatives: primary care is “the provision of integrated, accessible, health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of the family and the community.”

Primary care clinicians as well as individuals with a background in health insurance, healthcare finance, public health, government, and advocacy are encouraged to apply online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9QNQZTV>.

As outlined in statute, the Council will consist of nine voting members:

- One member from the New Mexico Human Services Department;
- One member from the New Mexico Department of Health;
- One member from the New Mexico Office of Superintendent of Insurance;
- One member from a statewide organization representing federally qualified health centers, and;
- Five members from statewide organizations representing primary care providers or statewide health professional societies or associations.

Additionally, the Council will include 13 non-voting advisory members “representing healthcare and other stakeholders.”

Among other duties, the Council will develop a five-year strategic plan to determine how primary care investment could increase access to primary care, improve the quality of primary care services, lower the cost of primary care delivery, address the shortage of primary care providers and reduce overall health care costs.

Investments in primary care yield significant returns for the economy and population health:

- On average, each physician supports \$3,166,901 in economic output, an average of 17.07 jobs, approximately \$1.4 million in total wages and benefits, as well as \$126,000 in state and local tax revenue.^[1]
- The availability of a primary care physician has been shown to lead to better health outcomes such as those relating to all-cause mortality (including cancer), and heart disease. An increase in one primary care physician per 10,000 individuals results in: 1) an 11 percent decrease in emergency room visits; 2) 6 percent decrease in hospital inpatient admissions; and, 3) 7 percent decrease in surgery utilization.^{[2],[3]} **HSD estimates these reductions translate to an annual \$10.5 million reduction in State General Fund expenditures.**

The Human Services Department provides services and benefits to 1,022,395 New Mexicans through several programs including: the Medicaid Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Support Program, and several Behavioral Health Services.

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^[1] <https://www.ama-assn.org/sites/ama-assn.org/files/corp/media-browser/public/2018-ama-economic-impact-study.pdf>

^[2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2690145/>

^[3] <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2765245>