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New Mexico first in nation to connect Human Services Department and Department of Health WIC services to combat child hunger

SANTA FE — Through a first-in-the-nation project partnering the state with Microsoft and a national child hunger organization, New Mexico families will now automatically be connected to the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program.

“There are New Mexico families for years who would come to the Human Services Department for assistance, never knowing they also qualified for WIC services with the Department of Health,” said Human Services Department Secretary and Acting Department of Health Secretary, David R. Scrase, M.D. “This project not only opens doors for collaboration between both state agencies, it ensures new mothers and families receive the state and federal assistance for which they qualify.”

The automated service determines if any family approved for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or Medicaid programs also meet WIC eligibility criteria, HSD will automatically refer families for WIC services.

“The interface between the two departments is a game changer for providing continuity of services in New Mexico and the rest of the country,” said New Mexico WIC and Farmers Market Director Sarah Flores-Sievers. “We have cracked the code to change how referrals and even enrollment to WIC are done nationwide.”

WIC is the federal supplemental nutrition program which serves to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and nursing (breastfeeding) women, infants and children up to age 5. The program helps to provide nutritious foods to supplement diets as well as information on healthy eating, including breastfeeding promotion and support and referrals to health care.

After receiving referral information from HSD, WIC will then begin the process to contact households identified to help educate them on the additional resources that are available to them.

Funding for creation of the integration between the two agencies was provided by [Share our Strength](#), an organization working to end childhood hunger and poverty in the United States. Lessons learned from New Mexico will help inform implementation

efforts in additional states and will help safeguard the health of nutritionally at-risk children and families across the country.

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