



## HEALTH CARE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, 2008

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports a health care system that provides a comprehensive level of health care for New Mexico residents and recognizes the need for efficient management of health care costs. The LWVNM believes that any health system implemented should have the following:

**Quality Health Coverage for All New Mexicans** - Every New Mexican should have full health care coverage, a benefit package that is at least equal to the best plan offered to state employees, and access to the services covered. Participation should be mandatory. Pre-existing conditions should not be excluded from coverage.

**Effective Cost Management** - Cost management should increase the health care benefits that accrue to patients from any given level of spending.

**Improvement of Health Care Quality and Safety** - A comprehensive effort to improve the quality and safety of health care in New Mexico should be launched and sustained, with dramatically increased public funding.

**Equitable Financing** - Reform should seek to reduce or eliminate cost-shifting across categories of insurance programs and payers, both public and private, and to make the distribution of financial burdens more equitable.

**Simplified Administration** - Reform should include the development of standardized forms, minimization of complicated co-pays/deductibles, and assurances of timely payment to providers.

Every New Mexico resident should have a comprehensive level of health care. The League favors a national health insurance plan, but until one is in place, the League supports expansion of state and federal plans

### In the 2008 Session the LWVNM Supports:

**Health Security Act which would create a unified and universal health care program that would cover all New Mexicans and control costs – S.3 and H.214**

- **Full funding for current Medicaid programs**
- **Increase in the Medicaid Eligibility for Children**
- **The end to Medicaid annual auto-closure**

The LWVNM believes that the above incremental reforms are important for New Mexico. The proposed reforms expand the number of people who are covered in New Mexico and brings over 133 million in federal funding for health care coverage for New Mexicans. Currently, because of the low level of Medicaid benefits in New Mexico, those who don't have health care coverage fall back upon the public/uncompensated care system. New Mexicans pay 100% of those costs through surcharges on our health insurance policies (the highest in the country) and through taxes. By increasing the eligibility for Medicaid, the federal government would pick up two-thirds to three-fourths of the costs – a great deal for New Mexico. The annual auto-closure of people on Medicaid only adds administrative cost to the system and leads to fragmented coverage for New Mexicans.

As stated in our position, the LWVNM believes that incremental reform, such as the Medicaid expansion listed above, are only stop-gap measures. We continue to support systemic reform, such as the Health Security Act, that will cover every New Mexican and will control the unsustainable increases in health care costs. The Mathematica study that was conducted for the Health Coverage for New Mexicans Committee concluded the Health Security Plan could deliver universal coverage for less than we are spending now.

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