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Governor orders agencies to develop child care plan for first responders, key personnel; encourages Medicaid enrollment

Also guarantees health coverage for uninsured early childhood workers diagnosed with COVID-19

SANTA FE - Governor Lujan Grisham on Wednesday announced three measures to safeguard against COVID-19 and strengthen insurance protections for New Mexicans.

Encouraging Medicaid Enrollment

“Right now, 56,000 New Mexicans are uninsured and eligible for Medicaid -- including children who may be eligible even if their parents are not. Even if we weren’t facing a public health emergency, we would want to enroll those folks. Given the current situation, it’s all the more important that we help every New Mexican get insured,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham.

The Governor referred New Mexicans to the Human Services Department’s [website](#) to sign up.

The state Human Services Department is also working to take advantage of every federal opportunity to expand New Mexicans’ access to health care. This includes encouraging federal officials to allow New Mexico to provide Medicaid at higher income levels.

Free Treatment Coverage for Child Care Workers Who are Diagnosed with COVID-19

In addition, the governor announced that the state will pay the cost of premiums so that uninsured child care workers who test positive for COVID-19 (and their immediate household members) who are not eligible for other coverage will be able to enroll in the New Mexico Medical Insurance Pool (NMMIP) -- the state’s high-risk pool -- and receive comprehensive health care coverage until they recover.

“This new rule applies to all child care workers who test positive, along with their immediate household members, regardless of income or immigration status,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham.

NMMIP is chaired by New Mexico’s Superintendent of Insurance; it provides comprehensive health coverage for people who have significant medical conditions, are uninsured, and are not currently eligible for other coverage (such as Medicaid or Medicare). The board of NMMIP held an emergency meeting on March 6 and voted to include COVID-19 as one of its covered conditions, which triggers expedited enrollment.

NMMIP does charge premiums to enrollees. The state of New Mexico will cover the premium costs for all uninsured child care workers with COVID-19 and their immediate household members who obtain coverage through NMMIP. Under emergency rules issued by the Superintendent of Insurance, deductibles and copayments are waived for treatment of COVID-19, influenza and pneumonia through NMMIP.

Uninsured New Mexicans who are not eligible for Medicaid or other insurance today may be able to sign up for comprehensive health insurance coverage through NMMIP if they pay their own premiums. The amount of the premium varies based on age, where in New Mexico you live and whether you are a smoker. More information about NMMIP is available at <https://nmmip.org/>

Directing Agencies to Develop Child Care Plan for First Responders and Other Key Personnel

The governor also instructed the Early Childhood Education and Care Department, Children, Youth, and Families Department, and Department of Public Safety to work with child care providers and ensure that child care services are available to first responders, health care professionals and other essential workers in the fight against COVID-19 - with no income eligibility threshold. Right now, ECECD is surveying key industries involved in this fight to identify precisely who those people are.

“Child care is also an essential and valuable service, but we may need to limit it to those who are working to mitigate and contain the spread and meet New Mexicans’ most urgent needs. **Everyone else should be at home.** This is how we protect our children, our families, our early childhood workforce, and New Mexico as a whole,” said the governor.

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