



Healthcare Legislative Agenda Town Hall 35

New Mexico First convened its 35th statewide town hall in May 2007. The event, *Strengthening New Mexico Healthcare: Access, Coverage, and Economics* brought together stakeholders in the healthcare and business communities from all parts of New Mexico. Over 200 people took part in the event, with 122 active participants who remained for all three days of deliberations. After the town hall, an Implementation Team was established to advance the citizens' recommendations. In the months that followed, the team researched the recommendations, prioritized them, and developed the following priorities for the 2008 Legislative Session. (The full report, containing all 18 final recommendations, is available at www.nmfirst.org.)

Legislative Priority	Description	Original Town Hall Recommendation (Summarized)
A) Cover New Mexico's uninsured	<p>Advocate for a system enabling New Mexicans to have affordable and portable healthcare that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual choice of healthcare coverage, • Individual ownership not tied to employment, so that payment dollars follow individual, • No denials, penalties, or premium increases due to pre-existing conditions, • Medical, behavioral, vision, and dental, and • Education of consumers by the public and private sectors. 	Rec 7: Ensure that everyone has access to affordable and portable healthcare.
B) Recruit and retain healthcare professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand Health Professional Loan Repayment Program, prioritizing primary care and specialty physicians and dentists. ▪ Expand Medical Student Loan for Services Program. ▪ Expand Health Service Corps. ▪ Increase the number of dental students supported under WICHE. ▪ Fund the application fee for residents who choose NM for their licensure. ▪ Fund nursing faculty to obtain higher degree levels. 	Rec 1: Recruit and retain healthcare more professionals by providing permanent funding for incentives, especially for those serving rural and underserved areas.
C) Support workplace wellness programs	<p>Support legislation enabling more employers to offer workplace wellness benefits to their employees. Such legislation could include amending the New Mexico Corporate Income Tax Law to provide an employer tax credit for the costs of implementing workplace wellness programs.</p>	Rec 13: Use incentives tied to measurable wellness, prevention, and healthy lifestyle outcomes.
D) Improve Health Information Technology (HIT) projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the Governor's proposal to charge the Telehealth and Health Information Technology Commission with developing an HIT plan and presenting funding requests to the legislature. ▪ Ensure the plan considers four project areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electronic claim submission, payment, enrollment, eligibility verification, authorizations, contracting, licensing, and compliance; ▪ Electronic medical records (both provider EMR/EHR systems and patient-owned personal health records); ▪ Telehealth, secure emails and electronic data exchange, including e-prescribing; ▪ Collection of de-identified data for public health, policy making and provider performance measurement purposes. ▪ Restructure the Commission to better represent private sector stakeholders and diverse areas of HIT expertise. ▪ Provide resources to help providers evaluate technology products and access federal, state and private grant opportunities. ▪ Create a single provider registry and a common secure authentication mechanism to facilitate HIT projects and help manage the healthcare workforce. 	Rec 14-17: Improve the use of technology and data in healthcare provision, coverage, and billing.

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