



NEW MEXICO FIRST

People. Ideas. Progress.

Healthcare Legislative Outcomes

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 regions 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 Implementation Team faced a contentious topic head on and the results below represent the first phase of their efforts. The Implementation Team will continue their work this summer, if Governor Richardson calls a Special Session. *(The full report, containing all 18 final recommendations, is available at www.nmfirst.org.)*

Implementation Team Chair Bill Johnson, along with other members of the team and New Mexico First staff, conducted several meetings and briefings with lawmakers and other leaders. These efforts lead to the activities below. Two bills championed by the Implementation Team became law.

Legislative Priority	Bill Description	Original Town Hall Recommendation (Summarized)	Outcomes
Recruit and retain healthcare professionals SB 127 Waive Licensure Fees for Medical Doctors (Sponsored by Sen. Komadina) SB 14 Health Professional Recruitment and Retention (Sponsored by Sen. Feldman)	SB 127 expands varying loan and loan repayment programs and reduces many of the other financial barriers that might impede students considering careers in medicine. SB 14 would have provided expanded appropriations for health professional recruitment, retention and educational opportunities.	Rec 1: Recruit and retain healthcare more professionals by providing permanent funding for incentives, especially for those serving rural and underserved areas.	SB 127 was passed and signed into law by Governor Richardson. Funding included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$480,000 for loan repayments; \$250,000 for medical student loans for service; \$1 million for the dental residence; \$7 million for dental residency center construction SB 14 did not pass. It passed the Senate Public Affairs Committee but was tabled in the Senate Finance Committee.
Support workplace wellness programs SB 129 Healthy New Mexico Task Force (Sponsored by Sen. Feldman)	SB 129 establishes a Healthy New Mexico Task Force, mobilizing the state against chronic diseases through coordinated plans for prevention, case management, and primary care.	Rec 13: Use incentives tied to measurable wellness, prevention, and healthy lifestyle outcomes.	SB 129 was passed and signed into law by Governor Richardson.

Legislative Priority	Bill Description	Original Town Hall Recommendation (Summarized)	Outcomes
HB 148/SB 148 Employee Wellness Program Tax Credit (Sponsored by Rep. Picroux, Rep. Taylor, and Sen. Komadina)	HB148/SB148 called for expansion of workplace wellness expansion benefits providing employers with tax credit for the costs of implementing workplace wellness programs.		HB 148/SB 148 did not pass. Though extensive efforts were made by New Mexico First volunteers to move these bills forward, both were tabled in the Senate Finance Committee.
Improve Health Information Technology (HIT) projects HB 37 Electronic Medical Records Act (Sponsored by Rep. Wirth)	HB 37 called for the development of an improved HIT plan, restructuring of the current Telehealth Commission, provision of new resources that would assist providers in both the areas of technology and funding, and the creation of a single provider registry.	Rec 14-17: Improve the use of technology and data in healthcare provision, coverage, and billing.	HB 37 did not pass. It passed the House Health and Government Affairs Committee and Senate Public Affairs Committee. A substitute version of the bill passed the House and Senate Judiciary Committees but did not pass the full Senate.

****The New Mexico First town hall participants called for a healthcare system that would enable New Mexicans to have affordable and portable healthcare. The legislature had four competing coverage bills under consideration during the 2008 session, each advancing some priorities raised at the town hall. In order to remain true to the town hall, New Mexico First opted not to endorse one coverage bill over another. Instead the original coverage recommendations were shared with all legislators and the governor's office.**

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