

Census data reports insurance rates good for New Mexicans

Written by NM Voices for Children
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ALBUQUERQUE—Veronica C. García, Ed.D, executive director of New Mexico Voices for Children, released the following statement regarding the U.S. Census Bureau's release of data showing that New Mexico had some of the biggest decreases in the nation in the percentage of the population without health insurance:

"This Census data represents great news for all New Mexicans. Ensuring that everyone can see a doctor when they're sick makes the state's population healthier and it's a good prescription for our economy. Clearly the Affordable Care Act is working, as hundreds of thousands of previously uninsured New Mexicans now have health insurance.

"The Medicaid expansion has been especially successful in New Mexico. Although the expansion covers low-income adults, we've seen a huge wave of children—more than 30,000—gain coverage when their parents enrolled. That is exactly what we expected would happen and is why we advocated so strongly for the expansion.

"While this news gives us cause to celebrate, we must not become complacent. Next year we will have to begin paying our share of the cost of the Medicaid expansion. The Legislature's own studies have shown that the expansion will bring in more than enough revenue to cover this cost through at least 2020. We hope that our lawmakers will see the enormous value in Medicaid—for both the health of New Mexico's people and her economy—and choose to fully fund it."

The Census data show that the rate of New Mexicans who lack health insurance dropped from 18.6 percent in 2013 to 14.5 percent in 2014. The rate for children dropped from 9 percent to 7.3 percent. New Mexico is one of eleven states with the highest decreases in the nation—3.5 percent or more—in the share of residents without health insurance.