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NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Secretary Catherine Torres, M.D.

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New Mexico WIC Program Leads Nation in Some Areas, Implements Improved Accounting Practices

(State Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health’s (DOH’s) Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program was one of the first in the nation to provide food benefits using the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system. WIC serves approximately 62,000 participants monthly and is leading the nation in breastfeeding initiation rates (77% of WIC moms breastfeed their babies after birth, which is higher than the 75% goal by U.S. Healthy People 2011).

A recent review of the WIC Program by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) found no instances of fraud. “FNS conducted a financial and program review [of WIC] and found no discrepancies,” said Bill Ludwig, Regional Administrator of FNS’s Southwest Region.

The FNS review, which examined four years (October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2009) of data totaling more than \$168 million in expenditures, identified variances amounting to less than one-tenth of one percent (0.10%) and some issues with accounting procedures. The review confirmed the findings of an internal review and other reviews by annual financial audits, which also concluded that no fraud occurred, but that procedures could be strengthened. The FNS review recommended changes to internal accounting procedures and reconciliation processes, all of which are currently in practice or are being implemented.

“I am very pleased that our federal partners have fully reviewed these issues and have confirmed the conclusions of previous reviews of financial practices in the WIC Program. The Department will continue to serve New Mexico’s families with the utmost integrity,” said Dr. Catherine Torres, Cabinet Secretary for DOH.

The WIC Program serves New Mexico’s women and their children by providing supplemental food, nutrition education, and referrals to health and social services. For information on the WIC Program, visit <http://www.nmwic.org> or call 1-866-867-3124.

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