

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD

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State to Participate in National Hospital Database

(Santa Fe) -- The New Mexico Department of Health and the New Mexico Health Policy Commission announced today that New Mexico will now contribute hospital discharge data to national databases for healthcare research and policy analysis at the federal level. The new partnership with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality will provide a wealth of technology and information for both the Department of Health and the Health Policy Commission.

The Health Policy Commission will provide data beginning with 2009 to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Healthcare Cost and Utilization Program. The Health Policy Commission administers a database that collects, analyzes and distributes health data and information for public and private agencies to use in health planning and policy development. The Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project maintains the largest collection of hospital care databases in the United States, enabling research on a broad range of healthcare issues.

"We are pleased to be a part of a national database system that will increase the visibility of our data, help support a broad base of scientific research, and strengthen a common federal-state mission of improving health care," said Sam Howarth, director of the Health Policy Commission and the Department of Health's Division of Policy and Performance. "We will contribute valuable data because of our unique makeup of Hispanic and Native American populations. This information will be important to healthcare disparities research and policy."

The Health Policy Commission is a state agency that was established by statute in 1991 to provide independent research, guidance, and recommendations on health policy issues that impact the planning of health care and health systems for New Mexico. The Commission annually publishes a report that presents an overall view of New Mexico hospital inpatient discharges as well as discharges for specific categories, which include asthma, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, injury and mental disorders.

"This furthers the Health Policy Commission's goal to serve as a source of planning for healthcare and health systems," said Howarth, PhD. "The partnership will also help New Mexico present hospital discharge data in a web-based format."

The data the Health Policy Commission will provide to the national database will not include information that would identify individual patients.

More information about the project is available at: <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov>.

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