STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Human Services Department
Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
David R. Scrase, M.D., Cabinet Secretary
Angela Medrano, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Kari Armijo, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Nicole Comeaux, J.D., M.P.H., Medicaid Director

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Ashley Espinoza
Public Relations Coordinator, Human Services Department
ashley.espinoza2@state.nm.us

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New Mexico awarded $9.6 million in behavioral health grants

$6 million for substance abuse and
$3.6 million for homeless/justice involved impacted by COVID-19

SANTA FE – New Mexico has been awarded two federal grants: $6 million from the Department of Justice to support those impacted by illicit opioids, stimulants and other drugs of abuse and, $3.6 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to address the growing behavioral health needs of the homeless and justice-involved population impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the New Mexico Human Services Department announced today.

“These two grants will help the state and local providers respond to the pressing behavioral health needs of so many New Mexicans who are facing difficult challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Dr. Neal Bowen director for the Behavioral Health Services Division.

The Department of Justice’s Comprehensive, Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Abuse Site-based program federal grant awarded $6 million to the New Mexico Behavioral Health Services Division for three years to provide financial and technical assistance to develop, implement, or expand comprehensive efforts to identify, respond to, treat, and support those impacted by illicit opioids, stimulants and other drugs of abuse. The division use the funding to support six sites in implementing programs using the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion model (LEAD) in tribal and non-tribal jurisdictions. LEAD is a public safety program that provides a tool for police officers to divert individuals suspected of low-level non-violent crimes rooted in substance use disorder and other unmet behavioral health needs to community-based services and treatment in lieu of arrest, prosecution, and incarceration.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded $3.6 million to the New Mexico Behavioral Health Services Division for the next nine months to address the increasing behavioral health needs of New Mexican’s homeless/justice-involved populations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the grant the division may continue utilizing FEMA-trained crisis counselors statewide to serve residents in highly impacted areas of the state. In addition to serving residents of long-term care facilities, patients in congregate and non-congregate care settings due to COVID-19 displacement; and the general public, including school-aged youth. The crisis counselors help to calm the individual’s fears and concerns due to the pandemic and coordinate the transfer of care to behavioral health resources and treatment providers.

Crisis counselors communicate via telehealth services using iPads, phones, laptops to address social distancing and COVID-19 safety measures. In addition to crisis counseling services, culturally relevant outreach materials will be developed to increase public awareness of the importance of crisis counseling, identifying symptoms, and the availability of the 24/7 New Mexico Crisis and Access Line 1-855-662-7474, and the critical need for participation in testing and contact tracing for COVID-19.

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