

10 Ways in 10 Days Way 7

10 ways budget cuts will hurt working New Mexicans



The Cut: The total budget for the Office of School and Adolescent Health (OSAH) was cut by 15 percent for the current fiscal year and there is talk of another 20 percent cut in the new budget. About half of their budget funds school-based health centers (SBHCs). With the proposed cuts, OSAH might have to close as many as ten SBHCs entirely. Some SBHC hours have already been cut back to just one day a week.

The Consequences: SBHCs are crucial points of access to health care for youth in rural areas. Students with access to SBHCs receive preventive care as well as referrals for more serious issues. SBHCs can save the state money in any number of ways: Students are more likely to get health care when it is accessible on campus and they don't have to miss a day of school to get it; Most of the care is covered by Medicaid, the lion's share of which is paid for by the federal government; And SBHC staff can influence youths who are engaging in or considering high-risk behaviors such as illicit drug use and binge drinking.

According to a 2010 survey, more than 80 percent of the students who are served by SBHCs say the centers have helped them make positive changes to their health behaviors—including changes related to substance abuse, better nutrition, and safe choices about sex.

A Better Choice: Governor Martinez and the Legislature need to take a balanced approach to addressing our state's revenue crisis. They should:

- Get rid of tax giveaways that do not create jobs.
- Ensure that profitable corporations and the rich pay their fair share.
- Make big out-of-state corporations and banks play by the same rules as our home-grown businesses.
- Make our system of tax breaks more transparent and accountable.

It's only fair that we stand up for New Mexico families and small businesses.

Urge our politicians to make the *Better Choice for New Mexico*.

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