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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Hidalgo Medical Services Named CareLink NM ‘Health Home’ for Hidalgo and Grant Counties by the New Mexico Behavioral Health Services Division**

Silver City, NM (March 6, 2018) – The New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) Behavioral Health Services Division (BHSD) has designated Hidalgo Medical Services (HMS) as its State “Health Home” for both Hidalgo and Grant counties, with services due to begin on April 1, 2018. The BHSD Health Home project, called CareLink NM, is designed to provide supportive care coordination services to individuals who suffer from both chronic medical and serious mental health conditions. The State of New Mexico has included CareLink NM as a designated service in the New Mexico Centennial Care (Medicaid) plan for its participants.

Patients who suffer from both chronic medical and serious mental health conditions, and their families, can become bewildered and frustrated by the complex process of successfully accessing various health care providers because of privacy, logistical, and other issues. Unfortunately, those individuals in need can sometimes become even more confused and stressed by multiple plans of patient care that are given to them by multiple health care providers. National health outcomes, such as frequency of accessing the Emergency Room and life expectancy, for individuals who meet CareLink NM eligibility have much room for improvement as a patient is diagnosed and treated for multiple conditions. Patient care coordination through the CareLink NM health care model has been shown to improve those health outcomes significantly.

“HMS is thrilled to have the opportunity to assist with improving patient access and to incorporate CareLink NM services into our communities,” stated Neal A. Bowen, PhD, HMS Chief Mental Health Officer. Bowen added, “CareLink NM will definitely have a positive impact on the well-being and quality of life of those who qualify here in Hidalgo and Grant counties, including the health and well-being of their support networks and family members. Coordinating health care across multiple systems, while maintaining a customer’s choice of which services to obtain – wherever they choose – is a way of both improving quality and supporting the southwestern New Mexico community organizations that assist our neighbors in need.”

CareLink NM services through HMS will be available to individuals who altogether: 1) receive Medicaid services, 2) permanently reside in Hidalgo or Grant counties, and 3) have multiple qualifying health care diagnoses – regardless of where a patient obtains primary care, specialized health care, or behavioral

health services. This voluntary program does not require CareLink NM patients to get their care solely through HMS. Dan Otero, HMS Chief Executive Officer, stated, “It is very exciting for HMS to have the opportunity to lead our communities with the goal of improved and more effective patient care coordination. CareLink NM intends to improve health outcomes for our citizens, while simultaneously providing more opportunities for employment in our service area. The HMS Health Home for CareLink NM is estimated to create upwards of 15 new staff positions. I’m very proud of Dr. Bowen and our organization for taking the lead on this innovative project, thanks to a positive collaboration and respectful partnership with our State government.”

CareLink NM Coordinators employed by HMS will assist patients – and their family members and caregivers – in developing comprehensive treatment plans for each individual. This service intends to improve patient access to preventive and regular health care, reduce the danger of complications from medications prescribed and managed in multiple locations without coordination, improve the ability to make and attend all types of medical appointments, provide continuity as patients transition from different levels of care (such as a hospitalization back to the community), and reduce the confusion of multiple treatments being offered.

To learn more about the CareLink NM services through HMS, please call (575) 597-2455 or visit <http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/health-homes.aspx>. For more information about HMS services, providers, and locations, please visit [www.hmsnm.org](http://www.hmsnm.org).