

Con Alma Releases Report About Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Report Offers Insight into Growing Trend, Recommendations for Curbing Growth

(Santa Fe) – The number of grandparents raising their grandchildren continue to rise in New Mexico and across the country, according to a new report that Con Alma Health Foundation released today. While the state has a strong tradition of extended families caring for members, grandparents are increasingly assuming primary care of their grandchildren because parents are unavailable or unwilling to be involved. To read the full report, look up www.conalma.org.

Con Alma, the state’s largest private foundation dedicated solely to health, studied this important issue to provide an understanding of the causes and issues behind the growing trend and how stakeholders, including the families affected, can best support this population. The report, *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in New Mexico: Understanding the Trend & Stemming the Tide*, offers insight into the statistics behind the stories as well as recommendations for moving forward.

“New Mexico has wonderful organizations working hard to help grandparents raise grandchildren – a critical need here. We also need people to work on addressing the root causes so children can live and thrive in intact families,” said Dolores E. Roybal, Con Alma’s executive director. “New Mexico’s history of extended families supporting one another is a valued tradition here, but grandparents who are alone in raising their grandchildren usually live in poverty while still working and navigating school and health-care systems.”

Key findings of the report include:

- More households with three and four generations are living under one roof.
- Hispanics make up 53 percent of New Mexico’s grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Native Americans represent 9 percent of New Mexico’s population and 20 percent of grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Native American grandparents have unique challenges in navigating two legal systems.
- The lack of parental involvement is due to a number of factors, including substance abuse, incarceration, divorce, mental-health diagnoses, domestic violence and military deployment.
- In 2015, more than 26,200 grandparents in New Mexico were responsible for the grandchildren living with them, and almost 61 percent were younger than 60.

“This trend has been steadily growing for many years, and there is no fast solution. We need New Mexicans to come together and work on policies, advocacy and long-term funding investments to create stronger families,” Roybal said.

Recommendations moving forward:

- Analyze and address the primary social determinants of health factors (poverty, race, ethnicity, education) and develop policy initiatives related to economic development and wage equity, racial and ethnic justice and parity, and educational equity and opportunity
- Analyze root causes to identify key issues, models of excellence and policies that move populations toward equity – when everyone has an equal chance at living a healthy life
- Connect this work with other policy work being done related to addressing health disparities in New Mexico