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Date:

Address

Dear :

Did you know that the state slogan is **“*Everybody is somebody in New Mexico*"**?

New Mexico’s 42 county and tribal health councils embody this slogan. It's been said that *“the community-based focus that health councils have is significant because they are run by and for the communities that they serve,”* being made up of people from all walks of life who care about the well-being of their community. We would like to invite you to join us as an active member of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Health Council, and help move the mission of this health council forward.

**Why Be a Member?**

We know that in New Mexico we’re continuing to deal with the negative consequences of COVID. But we’re also starting to grapple with how, as communities, we will not just cope with long-term health-related effects of COVID, but also rebuild our stressed social and economic sectors in a better way. COVID has shown how severe, systemic barriers to equity in education, health, employment and other areas—like racist policies/structures, years of disinvestment and inequitable sharing of resources—harm our ability to build and sustain thriving, just and healthy communities.

Reaffirmed by the *2019 NM County and Tribal Health Care Act* ([HB 137](https://nmlegis.gov/Sessions/19%20Regular/final/HB0137.pdf)), health councils give community members a strong voice and key role in improving health, policy and equity in local areas and the state. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Health Council, like others, mobilizes residents to assess community health and development needs and their root causes; reviews regional systems of care for disparities in access; identifies health priorities; then plans and coordinates long-term strategies to both address needs and influence policy. Right now, a unique initiative is building and enhancing the statewide health council network to be an even more inclusive and effective community infrastructure to achieve equitable, positive community change and health outcomes. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Health Council, for example, will be engaging community members in more active, participatory and just ways to strengthen strategic collaborations, undertake long-term systems-change efforts, and influence policies to help our community withstand future threats like COVID.

As we push ahead in this effort to strengthen our community engagement, we want to hear your *voice* so you can help make this happen. I can make myself available to talk with you and/or answer any questions you have. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,