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## Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D. announces appointments to Leadership at HSD

Santa Fe, N.M. – Human Services Department Cabinet Secretary David R. Scrase, M.D. announces the appointment of key leadership positions at the department.

The appointments include:



**Paul Ritzma** as general counsel. Ritzma is an accomplished attorney with experience in a wide-range of legal and management issues with specific expertise in health care, privacy and security, contracting and procurement, human resources and labor, civil rights, and natural resources law. He has extensive litigation, negotiation/mediation, senior management experience and he is licensed to practice law in New Mexico and Colorado. Ritzma will start with HSD July 29, 2019.

Ritzma most recently served as the legal director for the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing where he provided legal advice and counsel on Medicaid federal compliance, among many other duties for the department. He also brings a wealth of legal expertise in New Mexico state government, having held several high level positions such as deputy chief of staff and legal advisor for Governor Bill Richardson, general counsel for the New Mexico Human Services Department, deputy secretary/general counsel for the New Mexico Environment Department, special assistant attorney general for the Office of the New Mexico State Engineer and, as a litigation attorney with the Risk Management Division of the New Mexico General Services Department.

“I am pleased to welcome Paul Ritzma as chief legal counsel to HSD. Paul has a proven leadership record in several government legal departments, including Risk Management, Personnel, Environment, and as Deputy Chief Counsel to Governor Bill Richardson. His litigation skills and abilities as counselor at law will add to an office rich with legal talent,” said Edward L. Chavez, New Mexico Supreme Court Justice Edward Chavez (retired) currently serving as special counsel for HSD.



**Alexandria Castillo Smith** as project manager of strategic planning and special projects for the Office of the Secretary. Alexandria recently completed a Master’s of Social Work and a Master’s of Public Health from the University of Washington State. Previously, Castillo Smith, worked in a variety of settings, serving as a special assistant for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Administration for Community Living, an expansion associate for a college-prep boarding school for lower-income students, a scheduler for Congressman Harry Teague and, as a field organizer for the Obama campaign. Castillo Smith will start with HSD July 29, 2019.

The Human Services Department serves more than 900,000 New Mexicans through several programs including the; Medicaid Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Support Program, and several Behavioral Health Services.

“We are all delighted to have Paul return to the Human Services Department, bringing with him all of the experience he has gained since his time with us 10-years ago. In addition, Alex brings her own set of skills and unique experiences that will help to enhance our effectiveness as a department in serving the people of New Mexico,” said David R. Scrase, M.D. cabinet secretary for New Mexico Human Services Department.

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