



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friendly Competition for a Good Cause Fuels “Hoops 4 Hope”

New Mexico lawmakers to compete February 10 in annual “Hoops 4 Hope” legislative basketball game, earning bragging rights and raising funds for UNM Cancer Center

Albuquerque, NM – January 26, 2012 – It’s that time of year. With the legislative session in full swing, New Mexico’s lawmakers are facing off on the issues – and on the basketball court. The 2012 “Hoops 4 Hope” legislative basketball game will be held on Friday, February 10, in the Santa Fe High School gym. Honoring a tradition of friendly competition, the House “Aggies” will take on the Senate “Lobos.” Tip-off is at 7 p.m.

The game will raise money for the University of New Mexico Cancer Center, the Official Cancer Center of New Mexico and the only cancer center in the state designated by the National Cancer Institute – a distinction it shares with just 65 other premier centers nationwide. Members of the public are invited to support the game – and the cause – by purchasing a \$5 ticket or considering a donation. Details follow below.

“Not only is ‘Hoops 4 Hope’ an incredibly fun event for all involved, it is also an important source of support for the UNM Cancer Center’s service to the people of New Mexico. The proceeds help us deliver the cutting-edge, compassionate care that all New Mexicans deserve,” explains Cheryl Willman, MD, Director and CEO of the UNM Cancer Center. “We are deeply grateful to New Mexico’s legislators for their unwavering commitment to fighting cancer in our state. ‘Hoops 4 Hope’ is just one facet of that commitment.”

“Thanks to the generosity of many individuals and companies, last year’s game raised a record-breaking \$20,000,” says Billy Gupton, a Merrill Lynch financial advisor who has spearheaded fundraising for the “Hoops 4 Hope” legislative basketball game since 2007. “We’ve set the ambitious goal of topping that amount this year, and we’re working hard to make that happen.”

Game proceeds have benefitted the UNM Cancer Center since 2004, when legislators decided to use the game to support the Center in honor of Rep. Ray Ruiz, who died of lung cancer earlier that year. The New Mexico legislature has been instrumental in the UNM Cancer Center’s

2012 legislative basketball game, cont.

success from the beginning. In 1971, it appropriated \$1 million for the Center's construction – at the time, the first cancer center in the nation to be built from the ground up. In 1986, the legislature allocated a three-cent cigarette tax increase to support cancer and cigarette-related disease research at UNM; the resulting annual allocation has funded important cancer research at the UNM Cancer Center for 25 years.

Cancer is a leading cause of death in New Mexico, second only to heart disease. More than 8,000 New Mexicans experience a life-altering cancer diagnosis each year, say experts at the New Mexico Tumor Registry. The UNM Cancer Center plays an essential role in reducing the personal, social and economic burden of cancer in New Mexico. It treats over 60 percent of New Mexican adults and virtually all of the state's children affected by cancer – caring for nearly 16,000 patients from every county in the state over the past year. Dedicated to bringing the fruits of cancer research to all New Mexicans, the UNM Cancer Center conducts world-class research into cancer causes and cures, with a particular emphasis on cancer patterns and disparities affecting the peoples of the Southwest. It is funded in this work by over \$70 million in annual research support from federal and private sources.

For tickets and to donate

The 2012 “Hoops 4 Hope” legislative basketball game will take place on Friday, February 10, at the Santa Fe High School gym, located at 2100 Yucca Road in Santa Fe. Tip-off is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. Tickets cost \$5 per person and may be purchased in advance in Room 125 of the Capitol or at the door on game night. **For questions or to make a donation, please contact Billy Gupton at (505) 480-9316.**

About the UNM Cancer Center

The UNM Cancer Center is the Official Cancer Center of New Mexico and the only National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center in the state. One of just 66 NCI-designated cancer centers nationwide, the UNM Cancer Center is recognized for its scientific excellence, contributions to cancer research and delivery of medical advances to patients and their families. It is home to 85 board-certified oncology physicians representing every cancer specialty and 126 research scientists hailing from prestigious institutions such as MD Anderson, Johns Hopkins and the Mayo Clinic. The UNM Cancer Center treats more than 60 percent of the adults and virtually all of the children in New Mexico affected by cancer, from every county in the state. Last year, it provided care to almost 16,000 cancer patients. The Center's research programs are supported by \$70 million annually in federal and private funding.

UNM Cancer Center contact information

Dorothy Hornbeck, JKPR, (505) 797-6673, dhornbeck@jameskorenchen.com

Audrey Manring, UNM Cancer Center, (505) 925-0486, amanring@salud.unm.edu

###