

1. Your name and district number:

Cornelia Lange, MD, NM Senate District 20

2. The overall goals of welfare reform are to move people from welfare to work, reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy and encourage healthy marriages and family formation. TANF allows funds to be spent for marriage and couple relationship education, responsible fatherhood programs, financial education, and parenting programs. What benefits do you see for allocating 1-2% of the TANF budget in New Mexico for services to strengthen families?

Reduction in family violence, less stress related illnesses, less incidence of separation due to better conflict management skills.

3. Research has consistently shown that the social, educational, health and economic outcomes of children in healthy, two-parent families are better than those living in single-parent households. New Mexico has among the highest rates in the nation for teen pregnancies, school drop-outs, juvenile crimes and women and children living in poverty. New Mexico spends \$225 million every year dealing with the outcomes of families in crisis. If you are elected, what would you do to strengthen families?

Sex education with conflict management training for teens, and education of what healthy and unhealthy relationships are. Education on gender differences in handling conflict and also an awareness of developmental stage differences in problem solving. Quality day care for the children of our young parents while they work and attend school. A health care system for all our New Mexico families so they do not have to worry about access to quality care. Focus on funding preventative care that includes life skills.

4. The percentage of children in poverty in New Mexico is 26% higher than the national average. There are many factors contributing to this phenomenon including the fact that 45% of infants in New Mexico are born to teen parents. If you are elected, how would you reduce the number of teen pregnancies in New Mexico?

See #3. Look at first time teen moms and work with them to prevent a second pregnancy. Follow kids through the school system so

they are not "lost" moving from school to school. Establish programs in schools for girls to participate in competitive sports, where the affiliation with the team gives them motivation to not get pregnant. Work on an aggressive program to reduce poverty in our state. Enacting a law that our kids have to remain in school until they either get a High School Degree or are 18 yrs. old.

5. Studies show that couple relationship education (e.g., conflict resolution, communication skills, understanding of gender differences, etc.) results in happier and healthier marriages. What programs and services are available to couples and families in your district?

We have programs in our schools. We also have a number of churches that are in my District that offer services. But in canvassing my less advantaged areas, the services are not reaching some of our neediest individuals.

6. How can the NM Coalition for Healthy Families help you strengthen families in New Mexico?

Update your web site with the appropriate statistics on our vulnerable families in New Mexico. Also provide some stories of families who are living in these difficult times. It helps in working with some of our hardened voters who would like to blame individuals for poverty. In my District 20 I have both ends of the spectrum in SES. In this District 20, there appears to be little connection between the "Haves" and "Have Nots" unless an individual is working directly with those in need. If any of your members are interested in walking with me, I would be delighted. Please contact me at 505-292-7365 or cwlange@aol.com.

7. Do you have any additional ideas or comments regarding New Mexico's families?

Keep up your great work during these challenging times. Have an easy to access referral list to social services that visitors to the web site may access. Many of the residents in my District 20 in need do not have easy access to social services. Next time please send us a Word document to submit, since that would be easier to read and make comments. This format is hard in which to enter substantive comments.