

NEW MEXICO

DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH

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Pamela Martin, Ph.D., ABPP
Division Director

September 30, 2003

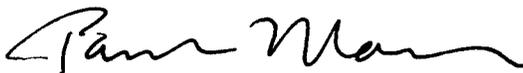
Jo Anne Barnhart
Commissioner, Social Security Administration
P.O. Box 17703
Baltimore, MD 21235-7703

Dear Commissioner Barnhart:

The need for young adults transition from a children's world of service to an adult world often require a transition. For these young adults receiving benefits to automatically lose them at the age of 18 is not always practical or beneficial to society. My organization totally supports the proposed regulations for continuation of benefits for people who are participating in a program of vocational rehabilitation services, employment services, or other support services (published for public comment on August 1, 2003). The newly proposed regulations would change the rules which guide how SSA decides to allow continuation of cash benefits for people in vocational or other support training who no longer meet the definition of eligibility for SSI benefits.

This is a very important proposal and I urge you to publish it as a final rule as soon as possible. Young people with disabilities should remain in school or in vocational training as long as possible to acquire the skills to become as independent as possible. This proposed regulation would make it possible for more young people to finish their educational, vocational, or other support training.

Sincerely,



Pamela Martin, Ph. D., ABPP
Behavioral Health Commissioner

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