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DEPARTMENT OF

Building a Healthy New Mexico!

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Lt. Governor, Health Secretary Celebrate Significant Public Health Victory Major Rodeo Promoter Casper Baca Signs “Bucking Tobacco Sponsorship” Policy

(Santa Fe) – Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish and Health Secretary Dr. Alfredo Vigil joined Casper Baca in Albuquerque this morning as he became the first New Mexico rodeo promoter to ban advertising, sponsorships and the distribution of free spit tobacco samples at all of Baca’s rodeo events.

Baca signed the “Bucking Tobacco Sponsorship” policy during a special ceremony with Lt. Governor Denish, Sen. Dede Feldman, Dr. Vigil and Youth Development, Inc, President & CEO Chris Baca, among others. YDI, a contractor of the Department of Health’s Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program, helped Casper Baca develop his anti-tobacco policy.

“We congratulate Casper Baca on taking a stand against an industry that harms the health of our citizens,” Lt. Governor Denish said. “His anti-tobacco commitment furthers the efforts the Governor and I have made to make New Mexico a healthier place for our children and families.”

Baca, whose annual, eight-week Baca Rough Stock Rodeo Series is running in Belen through March 30, said rodeo has been long associated with spit tobacco. “As a community, rodeo sends a dangerous message to our young children when we surround them with messages that tobacco and rodeo go together,” he said. “Smoking and chewing aren’t tough, they’re deadly.”

Dr. Vigil said the danger of oral cancer is not as well known as the danger of lung cancer, but is very real. One out of 10 teenage boys uses spit tobacco, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Spit tobacco can lead to oral cancer, gum disease, nicotine addiction, and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

“Mr. Baca’s pledge helps us send the message that no form of tobacco is safe,” Dr. Vigil said.

The Department’s Tobacco Use Prevention and Control program and its partners use a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to decrease commercial tobacco use. The program works with communities, schools, and organizations across the state to promote healthy, tobacco-free lifestyles among all New Mexicans, which will reduce tobacco-related illness, save lives and save money. For more information, look up <http://www.health.state.nm.us/tobacco.html>.

Casper Baca grew up competing in rodeos and working with the “Baca Brothers Rodeo Company.” In 1986 he started the Casper Baca Rodeo Company, which produces up to 50 rodeos a year throughout the Southwest.

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