

## Poverty, Health, and Education in Senate District 13

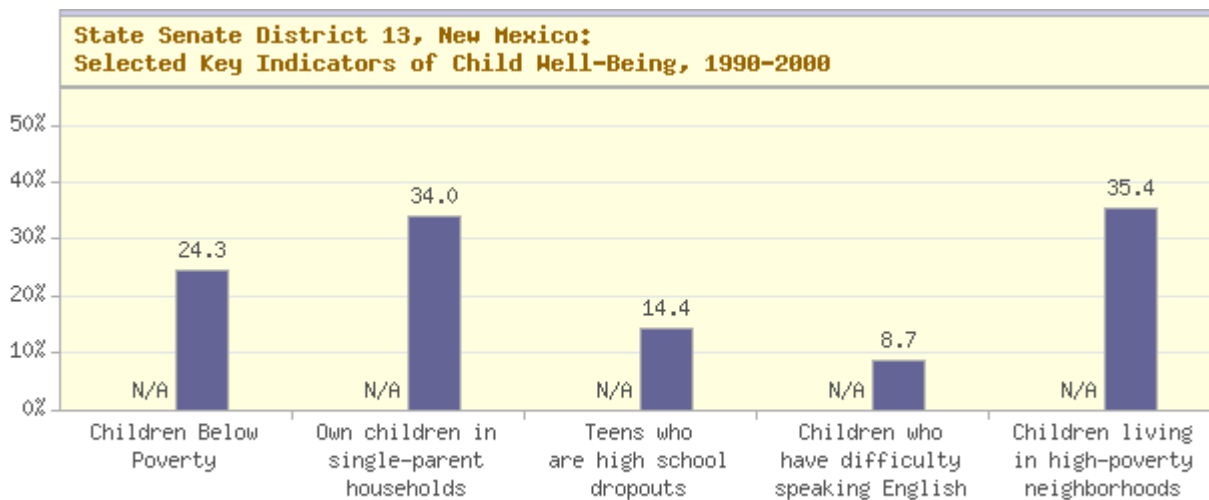
<http://www.dedefeldman.com>

### Senate District 13 still has poverty pockets.

The conventional wisdom about the North Valley, which occupies the bulk of Senate District 13, is that it is a yuppified, high income area. But did you know that 35.4 percent of children live in low-income (high poverty) neighborhoods, only 30 percent of young people between 18 and 24 have a high school diploma or equivalent, and that approximately half of all children in the heart of the district are on Medicaid?

Compared to the other 41 senate districts in the state of New Mexico District 13 has the 20<sup>th</sup> highest poverty level for people under the age of 18. The following graphs and maps present information on the status of Senate District 13 including key indicators of childhood well being, education, Medicaid coverage, and voter participation.

### Key Indicators of Child Well Being in Senate District 13

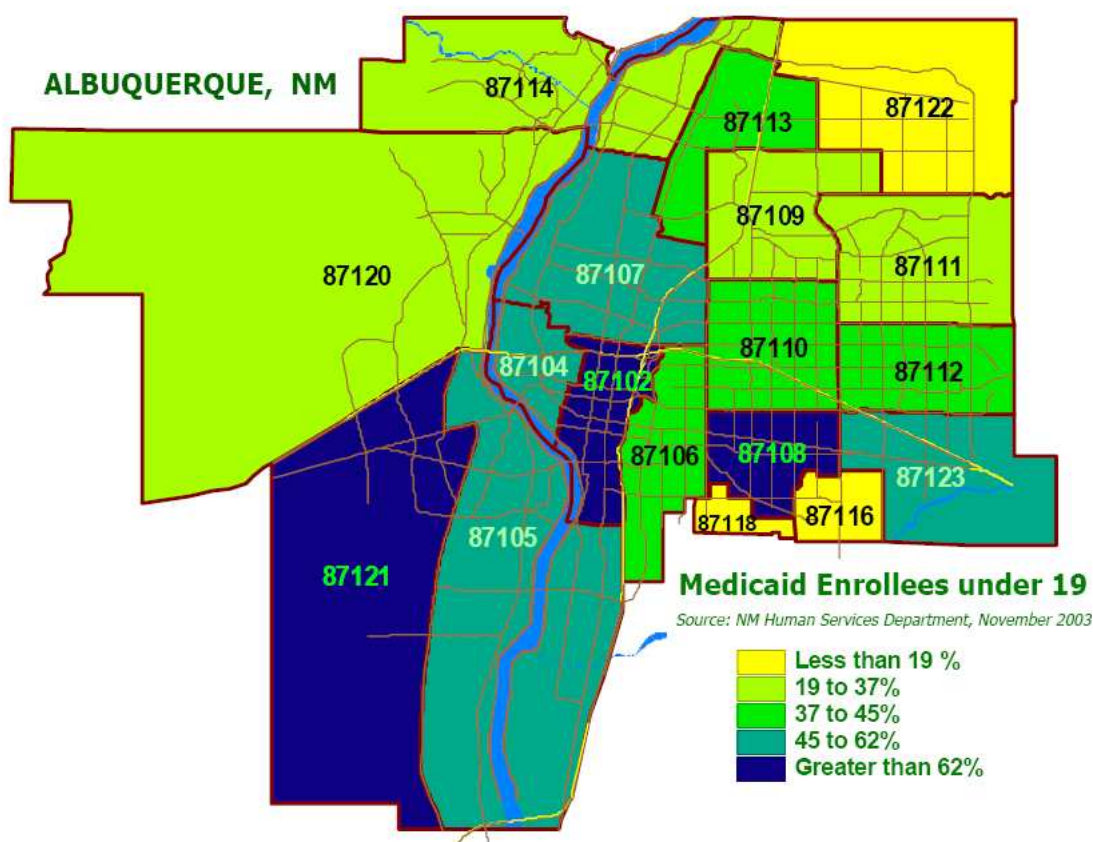


Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, for The Annie E. Casey Foundation

## Medicaid

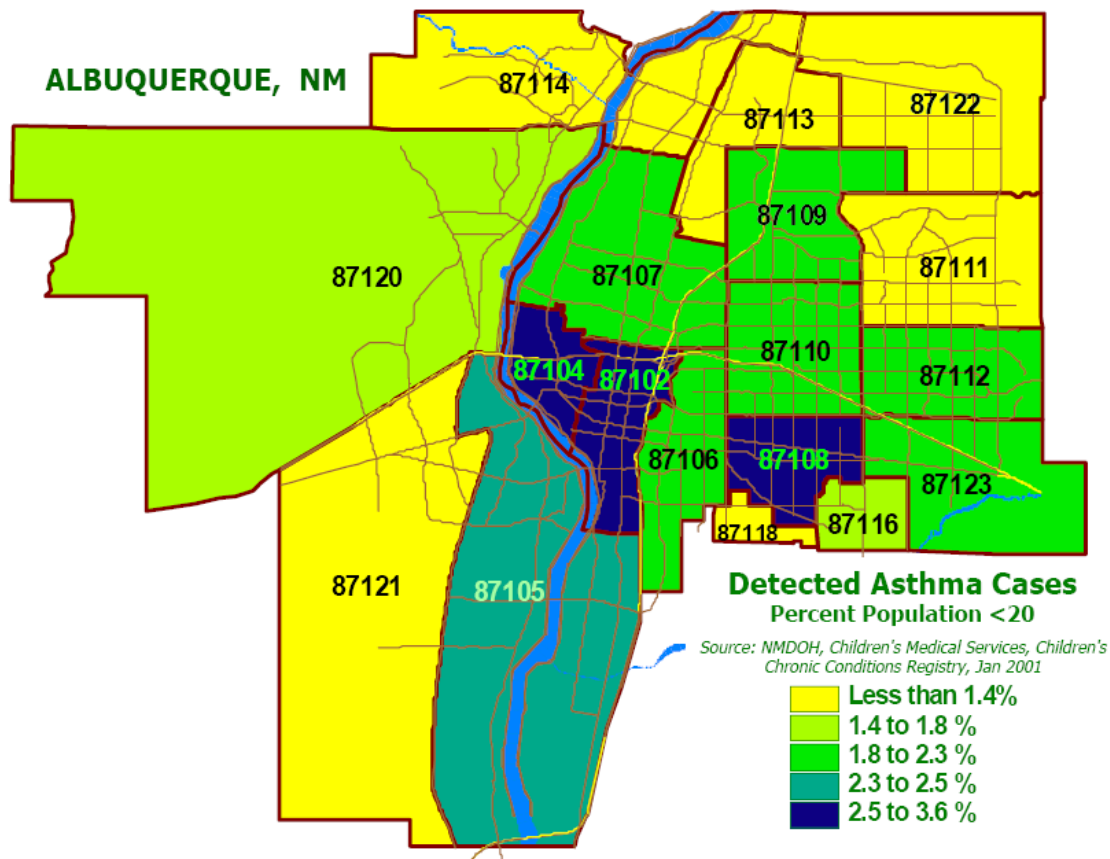
In the heart of Senate District 13, covering zip codes 87107 and 87104, approximately 50% of all children under 19 get their health care through Medicaid. Medicaid is a federal-state health insurance program that covers income-eligible families. The alternative to Medicaid for many low income families is to go without insurance. But that poses its own problems.

Uninsured New Mexicans seek health care services through emergency room visits more often than through any other source of medical care which makes these services unavailable for true emergencies and costs New Mexicans more than preventive and consistent medical care through clinics and regular doctor visits.



## Asthma

Asthma is the most common, chronic disease among children and is the most common reason for childhood disability. The burden of asthma includes higher risk for early death, lower quality of life for the child and his/her family, the need for more health care, and the cost of that health care. Conditions that contribute to the onset of asthma are low birth weight and early respiratory disease (related to limited access to health care and poverty) and physical environmental factors. In Senate District 13, there is an elevated childhood asthma rate in the Old-Town Sawmill area.



NMDOH - Public Health Division - District 1 - Office of Community Assessment, Planning and Evaluation

## Education

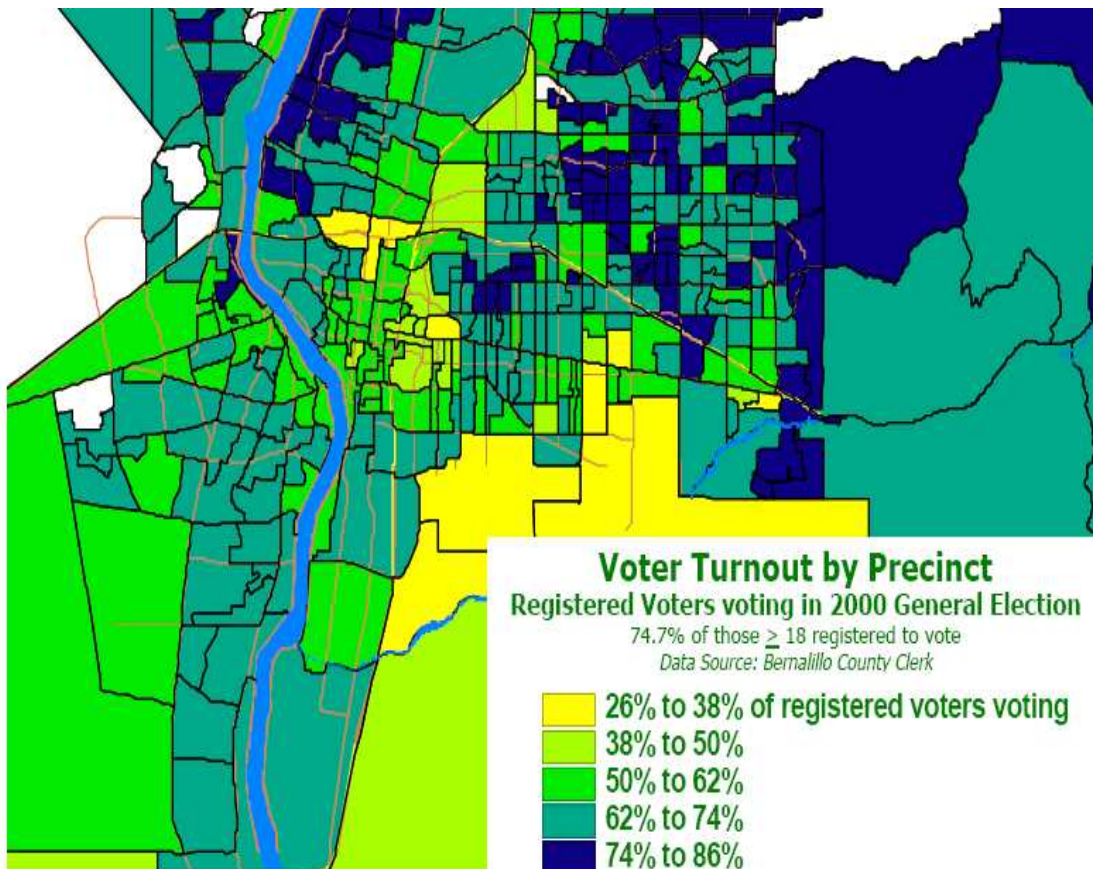
Of the 15 public schools in Senate District 13, 7 met adequate yearly progress during the 2004-2005 school year. Those include Alvarado Elementary, Chaparral Elementary, Cochiti Elementary, Douglas MacAuthur Elementary, Duranes Elementary, Griegos Elementary, and Taft Middle schools. The following schools did *not* measure up: Hodgkin Elementary, La Luz Elementary, Los Ranchos Elementary, Mission Avenue Elementary, Reginald Chavez Elementary; Garfield Middle School; and Del Norte High and Valley High schools.

In Senate District 13, 29.6 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 24 have a high school diploma or equivalent making it the 29<sup>th</sup> out of the 42 senatorial districts for the lowest percentage of people with diplomas for that age group. See <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/acc.assess/accountability/index.html> for high school diploma (or equivalent) rates for all New Mexico senate districts.

(Source: New Mexico Public Education Department)

## Voter Participation

Kudos to Senatorial District 13! The majority of Senatorial District 13 had a relatively high voter turnout in the 2002 General Election. Seventy four to 86 percent of registered voters voted in precincts bordering the east side of the Rio Grande river and 62 to 74 percent of registered voters voted in most of the remaining precincts. Keep up the good work!



## **Summary**

The foundation of adult health and well being begins in the womb and that means supporting mothers and children. Early healthcare and education improve adult health and well being and earnings. It reduces high school drop out rates, the incidence of teen and childhood death, and teen risk for substance abuse and violence. Poverty worsens already existent health problems due to limited access to quality health care. This results in poor health, disability, and absence from school and work. Poverty reduces educational attainment, because people who live in poverty are at risk for health problems or disability that takes them out of the educational environment. Low income people are under pressure to drop-out of school to work or to take care of family. Thus, to serve all the people in District 13 policy priorities must include access to quality health care, full Medicaid funding, and education – a tall order! But it is my mandate and I take it seriously.

Sources: New Mexico Department of Health, Public Health Division; New Mexico Public Education Department; and The Annie E. Casey Foundation