ALBUQUERQUE — On Jan. 1, the New Mexico Environmental Public Health Network became a program of New Mexico Voices for Children. The NMEPHN, which was formed in 2018, is committed to advocating for environmental policies that positively impact public health. Its Advisory Board is comprised of medical, environmental, and public health professionals from throughout the state, including retired pediatrician Lance Chilton, MD, Anna Rondon of the New Mexico Social Justice Equity Institute, and Sharon Finarelli of the New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils.

“We are very excited to be welcoming NMEPHN into the NM Voices family,” James Jimenez, executive director of the child advocacy agency said. “Our portfolio of environmental work has increased tremendously over the past several years, so this new partnership makes perfect sense.”

NMEPHN works on air quality issues such as reducing pollution from the state’s oil and gas and transportation industries, water quality issues including PFAS groundwater pollution and lead contamination, and land use issues such as pesticide use – all of which impact vulnerable populations.

Created in 1987, NM Voices began working on environmental and climate issues in 2016. Some of its recent work includes fighting to improve state and federal bonding practices so oil companies are fiscally responsible for capping and cleaning up wells that are no longer producing, and urging Congress to reauthorize the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Its public health work has focused primarily on the social determinants of health, including the expansion of income supports, creating a more equitable tax code, and mitigating food insecurity.

“We believe that having NMEPHN be a project of NM Voices will increase the effectiveness of both organizations,” Denise Fort, a founding member of NMEPHN said. “NM Voices’ reputation as the leading child advocacy organization in New Mexico will bring higher visibility to the work of NMEPHN, and the mission of NMEPHN will bring a sharper focus to how climate, environmental, and energy public policies impact the health and well-being of New Mexico’s families.”