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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Miera ORIGINAL DATE 2/13/09
LAST UPDATED _____ HB 338
SHORT TITLE Study Preschool Dental Exams for Children SB _____
ANALYST Chabot

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$10.0	Non-Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families (CYFD)

Department of Health (DOH)

New Mexico Health Policy Commission (PED)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 338, Study Preschool Dental Exams for Children, appropriates \$10 thousand from the general fund to DOH for the purpose conducting a study in conjunction with PED to evaluate the costs and benefits of requiring dental examinations for all children prior to entering school or preschool.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$10 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2010 shall revert to the general fund.

The LFC submitted a balanced general fund appropriation recommendation for fiscal year 2010. Any additional general fund expenditures appropriated by the Legislature must be off-set by an equal amount from the appropriation recommendation.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All

appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DOH reports “Poor oral health has been related to decreased school performance, poor social relationships, and less success later in life. Children who take a test while they have a toothache are unlikely to score as well as children who are undistracted by pain (www.lmchoralhealth.org). The 2000 New Mexico Children’s Oral Health Surveillance Survey report found that 65 percent of children enrolled in a public school had experienced tooth decay and 37 percent had untreated tooth decay. It also found that 27 percent of third grade children were unable to obtain needed dental care within a given year and 10 percent of these children had never been to a dentist.”

DOH states previous projection determined a feasibility study would cost approximately \$134 thousand.

CYFD assesses that early access to dental care is essential for healthy growth in children. Preschool children with untreated tooth decay are more likely to develop poor eating habits, have difficulty socializing with peers, have speech problems, and perform poorly in school.

PED estimates the school-based preschool programs serve 2,230 children and the average enrollment for kindergarten is 23,600 children generating a requirement for 25,800 dental exams if the bill is enacted.

HPC states rural areas have a shortage of dentists making the requirement for the examinations problematic for some communities. New Mexico is ranked last in the number of dentists per capita ([New Mexico Geographic Access Data System](#)). Ten states and the District of Columbia have laws requiring oral health assessments prior to school enrollment.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

PED recommends in beginning in line 20 striking “all children prior to entering school” and inserting “all children first enrolling in public schools at either pre-school or kindergarten levels.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED states the definition of “all children entering school” is unclear. It could all children regardless of grade level or transfers enrolling in a new school.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Should the requirement for dental examinations be extended to children entering CYFD pre-school programs?
2. What type of assessment is envisioned for \$10 thousand? Could DOH and PED do a literature search to determine if dental exams prior to entering school produce positive outcomes?
3. If a child has dental problems found during an examination prior to entering school, is it intended that the problems are fixed before enrollment?