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HOUSE MEMORIAL 26

**52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015**

INTRODUCED BY

Carl Trujillo

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO  
CREATE A STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN DESIGNED TO ADDRESS THE  
MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS.

WHEREAS, the department of health estimates that more than  
forty thousand New Mexicans are living with the hepatitis C  
virus; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, hepatitis C rates in New Mexico  
increased by one hundred thirty-three percent; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately four thousand new cases  
of hepatitis C infection per year in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the primary risk of infection is sharing  
injection drug use equipment; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to experience  
disproportionately high overdose death rates associated with

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1 injection drug use; and

2 WHEREAS, recent epidemiological data from the department  
3 of health suggest a rise in hepatitis C rates among young women  
4 under the age of thirty; and

5 WHEREAS, the financial and social costs of the hepatitis C  
6 disease burden in New Mexico surpass those associated with most  
7 other viruses, including HIV; and

8 WHEREAS, New Mexico leads the nation in the rate of death  
9 due to cirrhotic liver disease; and

10 WHEREAS, hepatitis C can be cured, but access to hepatitis  
11 C treatment is impeded by cost or lack of health insurance  
12 coverage; and

13 WHEREAS, hepatitis C treatment can cost up to ninety-five  
14 thousand dollars (\$95,000) a month; and

15 WHEREAS, the social stigma associated with injection drug  
16 use and living with hepatitis C may prevent New Mexicans from  
17 seeking treatment; and

18 WHEREAS, New Mexico possesses the intellectual and  
19 clinical expertise to address these related epidemics  
20 simultaneously;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
22 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department  
23 of health be requested to convene a task force to create a  
24 statewide strategic plan designed to address the mortality and  
25 morbidity associated with the hepatitis C virus; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force research and  
2 develop a comprehensive plan to increase access to hepatitis C  
3 treatment in New Mexico; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of health be  
5 requested to invite representatives from the following to  
6 participate in the task force:

- 7 A. the university of New Mexico project ECHO;
- 8 B. the medical assistance division of the human  
9 services department;
- 10 C. the Bernalillo county community health council;
- 11 D. the New Mexico public health association;
- 12 E. the Santa Fe county health policy and planning  
13 commission;
- 14 F. the Rio Arriba county health council;
- 15 G. the drug policy alliance;
- 16 H. the southwest care center; and
- 17 I. any other appropriate entity; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present  
19 recommendations to the legislative health and human services  
20 committee and the legislative finance committee no later than  
21 November 30, 2015; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
23 transmitted to the legislative finance committee, the  
24 legislative health and human services committee and the  
25 secretary of health.

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