

HOUSE BILL 173

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026

INTRODUCED BY

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AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH; CREATING THE DEMENTIA CARE SPECIALIST  
PROGRAM; PRESCRIBING DUTIES TO THE AGING AND LONG-TERM SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT; REQUIRING REPORTING; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] DEMENTIA CARE SPECIALIST  
PROGRAM CREATED.--

A. As used in this section:

(1) "dementia" means a disorder that results  
in cognitive decline, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular  
dementia, Lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia and other  
neurocognitive disorders as recognized by nationally accepted  
clinical standards;

(2) "dementia care specialist" means a person  
employed or contracted by the department or a department-

1 designated provider that is trained to provide dementia-  
2 specific care coordination, early detection support, systems  
3 navigation, caregiver education, community outreach or  
4 workforce training;

5 (3) "department" means the aging and long-term  
6 services department; and

7 (4) "program" means the dementia care  
8 specialist program.

9 B. The "dementia care specialist program" is  
10 created as a program administered by the department to provide  
11 support for persons or families of persons experiencing  
12 dementia.

13 C. The department shall:

14 (1) oversee implementation of the program;

15 (2) employ or contract for dementia care  
16 specialists to serve throughout the state;

17 (3) require dementia care specialists to  
18 provide:

19 (a) cognitive assessments and care  
20 planning for persons living with dementia and their caregivers;

21 (b) assistance with early detection,  
22 including community cognitive assessments and referrals to  
23 diagnostic services;

24 (c) education, including caregiver  
25 education, skills training and support to reduce stress and

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1 prevent crises;

2 (d) training to expand dementia  
3 competency among health care providers, first responders,  
4 long-term care workers and community-based organizations; and

5 (e) assistance in development of  
6 dementia-capable policies and practices within communities,  
7 clinics and institutions;

8 (4) collaborate with the health care  
9 authority, the department of health, the Indian affairs  
10 department, area agencies on aging, health care systems,  
11 federally recognized Indian nations, tribes and pueblos within  
12 New Mexico and community-based organizations to support the  
13 program;

14 (5) provide culturally appropriate outreach  
15 and services, including materials in languages commonly spoken  
16 in New Mexico; and

17 (6) collect data necessary to measure program  
18 performance, including impacts on caregiver stress, early  
19 detection, care transitions, hospitalization, emergency  
20 department utilization and institutional placement.

21 D. The department shall submit an interim report on  
22 October 1, 2028 and a report on July 1, 2029 on the program to  
23 the governor, the legislative health and human services  
24 committee and the legislative finance committee. The report  
25 shall include:

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- 1 (1) the number and geographic distribution of
- 2 dementia care specialists;
- 3 (2) populations served and services delivered;
- 4 (3) workforce training activities completed;
- 5 (4) outcomes related to early detection, care
- 6 transitions, caregiver support and health care utilization;
- 7 provided that such information is compliant with the federal
- 8 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and
- 9 the federal regulations promulgated pursuant to that act;
- 10 (5) program cost savings to the state when
- 11 data is available; and
- 12 (6) recommendations for program continuation
- 13 or expansion.

14 SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.--One million dollars  
15 (\$1,000,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the aging  
16 and long-term services department for expenditure in fiscal  
17 years 2027 through 2029 to conduct the dementia care specialist  
18 program. Any unexpended balance remaining at the end of fiscal  
19 year 2029 shall revert to the general fund.

20 SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the  
21 provisions of this act is July 1, 2026.