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SENATE MEMORIAL 45

**50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012**

INTRODUCED BY

Richard C. Martinez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO'S ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON HOW TO ENHANCE AND EXPAND NEW MEXICO'S HARM-REDUCTION SERVICES RELATED TO OPIOID MISUSE AND DEPENDENCY.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has long been concerned about the high rates of opioid misuse and dependency and the impact on the people of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and prevention has recently declared the United States to have a crisis and epidemic of opioid abuse and addiction; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is facing opioid overdose death rates of unprecedented proportions; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico ranks number one in the country in overdose-related deaths, as reported by the centers for disease

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1 control and prevention on November 1, 2011; and

2 WHEREAS, the rate for New Mexico overdose-related deaths  
3 is twenty-seven per one hundred thousand population, more than  
4 twice the national average; and

5 WHEREAS, nationally, overdose death rates now outnumber  
6 traffic fatality rates; and

7 WHEREAS, the department of health's substance abuse  
8 epidemiology unit at the university of New Mexico estimates  
9 that there were nearly twenty-four thousand adult intravenous  
10 drug users in New Mexico in 2006, and others report that number  
11 to be as high as fifty thousand; and

12 WHEREAS, the federal substance abuse and mental health  
13 services administration recently conducted a review of  
14 emergency room visits for nonmedical use of opioid analgesics  
15 and found that the number of visits for nonmedical opioid use  
16 increased one hundred eleven percent between 2004 and 2008; and

17 WHEREAS, people who use opioids, including heroin and  
18 prescription medications, are at risk for health-related harm  
19 associated with the use such as blood-borne infections like  
20 human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis C, skin infections  
21 at injection sites, venous damage and, ultimately, death due to  
22 overdose; and

23 WHEREAS, drug abuse and dependence is a complex issue that  
24 requires innovative approaches to harm reduction in drug use;  
25 and

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1           WHEREAS, there are evidence-based approaches that are  
2 proven to work in reducing the harm associated with opioid use,  
3 including medically supervised injection facilities, opioid  
4 overdose reversal antidotes such as naloxone, access to safe  
5 syringes and access to medication-assisted treatment, including  
6 methadone and buprenorphine; and

7           WHEREAS, individuals suffering from addiction need access  
8 to high-quality treatment that is health-focused, yet these  
9 individuals remain highly underserved; and

10          WHEREAS, harm reduction strategies for opioid use and  
11 overdose can save both lives and money; and

12          WHEREAS, there is a need to enhance the existing system in  
13 New Mexico and explore more comprehensive and innovative  
14 models; and

15          WHEREAS, medically supervised injection sites are  
16 controlled health care settings where drug users can more  
17 safely use drugs under clinical supervision, and where they  
18 have access to health care, counseling and referral to health  
19 and social services, including drug treatment; and

20          WHEREAS, medically supervised injection sites have proven  
21 to reduce transmission of blood-borne viruses, prevent overdose  
22 fatalities, foster safer injection practices and increase  
23 access or referrals to addiction treatment programs, including  
24 medication-assisted treatment and detoxification services;  
25 savings to taxpayers by reducing societal costs associated with

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1 costly emergency room visits and increased crime and violence;  
2 and a reduction in social harms associated with intravenous  
3 drug use, such as public disorder, public intoxication, public  
4 injecting of drugs and publicly discarded syringes; and

5 WHEREAS, medically supervised injection sites are best-  
6 suited to serve older, long-term users, who are more difficult  
7 to reach through more traditional prevention and treatment  
8 settings and who often avoid, or have never had contact with,  
9 the treatment system; and

10 WHEREAS, worldwide, there are sixty-five safe injection  
11 facilities in twenty-seven cities in eight countries, including  
12 Vancouver, Canada;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
14 OF NEW MEXICO that the university of New Mexico's Robert Wood  
15 Johnson foundation center for health policy be requested to  
16 conduct a feasibility study to evaluate how to expand and  
17 enhance opioid harm-reduction services in New Mexico; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of New Mexico's  
19 Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health policy explore  
20 emerging and novel approaches to opioid harm reduction,  
21 including exploring the feasibility of implementing a pilot  
22 medically supervised injection site, staffed with medical  
23 professionals, to reduce overdose deaths, increase access to  
24 health services and treatment and further expand access to safe  
25 injection equipment to prevent the transmission of human

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1 immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis C; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of New Mexico's  
3 Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health policy include  
4 in its study input from the department of health, the children,  
5 youth and families department, the human services department,  
6 the interagency behavioral health purchasing collaborative, the  
7 behavioral health planning council, the university of New  
8 Mexico, the New Mexico public health association, the drug  
9 policy alliance, the New Mexico women's justice project, the  
10 Navajo AIDS network, the Santa Fe mountain center, casa de  
11 salud, New Mexico AIDS services, health care for the homeless,  
12 staff from established supervised injection sites, harm-  
13 reduction researchers, harm-reduction advocates, people in  
14 recovery from opioid addiction and individuals or family  
15 members who have experienced an overdose; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of New Mexico's  
17 Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health policy report  
18 its findings and any legislative recommendations to the interim  
19 legislative health and human services committee and other  
20 appropriate interim committees by November 1, 2012; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
22 transmitted to the university of New Mexico's Robert Wood  
23 Johnson foundation center for health policy and to each of the  
24 agencies, organizations and individuals named to participate in  
25 the study.

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