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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**56th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2024**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<u>SB103</u>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<u>Lopez</u>
<b>Tracking Number</b>	<u>.227216.1</u>	<b>Committee Referrals</b>	<u>SCC/SEC/SFC</u>
<b>Short Title</b>	<u>UNM Spanish Education Program</u>		
<b>Analyst</b>	<u>Davalos</u>	<b>Original Date</b>	<u>1/25/2024</u>
		<b>Last Updated</b>	<u>2/12/2024</u>

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## **BILL SUMMARY**

### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 103 (SB103) would appropriate \$350 thousand to the board of regents of the University of New Mexico (UNM) to fund the medical Spanish education program at UNM's School of Medicine, College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy, and the College of Population Health.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill appropriates \$350 thousand from the general fund to the board of regents of UNM for expenditure in FY24 and FY25. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY25 shall revert to the general fund. Although, the House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 as amended (HB2/HAFCS/aHF1#1/aSFC) does not contain the appropriation proposed by SB103.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

According to UNM, SB103 would support the development and implementation of educational and learner assessment materials in Spanish communication skills for graduate students at the School of Medicine, College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy, and College of Population Health. UNM noted funds would be allocated to cover bilingual Spanish and English faculty, staff, and standardized patients; the development, implementation, and evaluation of educational and learner assessment materials; and the administrative support and operational support for a unified Health Sciences Center Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Spanish language equity initiative.

UNM notes the appropriation in SB103 would support the education of health care providers that can serve the linguistically diverse population of New Mexico. Further, UNM notes SB103 would help UNM Health Sciences Center comply with the federal Health and Human Services [National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services \(CLAS\)](#). Although not a mandated standard, CLAS helps improve the quality of services to all people through a framework that advances health equity and helps reduce disparities with a whole-person approach that takes cultural background into consideration when attending to a person's health care needs.

UNM also noted the importance of supporting bilingual education in the medical profession, sharing that in 2020 the most common non-English language spoken in households in New Mexico was Spanish; 26 percent of the households in New Mexico speak Spanish as the primary language at home, according to the US Census Bureau. According to UNM, data shows many healthcare institutions continue to fall short of delivering language services, an issue that was magnified during the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, UNM notes that people with a preferred language other than English have disparities in accessing healthcare and screening prevention services and, consequently, a higher risk of experiencing healthcare disparities. According to UNM, patient-provider language concordance improves health outcomes and decreases health disparities.

**SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC Files
- New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED)
- University of New Mexico (UNM)

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