

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL

55th LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2021

INTRODUCED BY

DISCUSSION DRAFT

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER, TO NOMINATE SANJEEV ARORA, M.D., FOR THE NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE.

WHEREAS, every year, millions of people suffer and die needlessly from conditions and diseases that can be prevented, managed and cured because of a lack of access to adequate health care; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the world bank and world health organization reported that at least one-half of the world's population lacks access to essential health services, let alone specialist services, for common, complex diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus and tuberculosis; and

WHEREAS, the imbalance of medical knowledge severely

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1 impacts rural, underserved communities and manifests in
2 premature deaths, health disparities, economic burdens and low
3 quality of life; and

4 WHEREAS, in 2003, to meet these challenges, Sanjeev Arora,
5 M.D., a gastroenterologist at the university of New Mexico,
6 conceived of and created extension for community healthcare
7 outcomes, known as project ECHO, with his clinical team; and

8 WHEREAS, project ECHO was devised to address disparities
9 in hepatitis C care for patients across New Mexico's remote
10 areas; and

11 WHEREAS, Dr. Arora grew up in India in a family dedicated
12 to working against poverty, disease and malnutrition; and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. Arora completed his pre-medical and medical
14 degrees in New Delhi and New York and became a gastroenterology
15 fellow and then a faculty member at Tufts medical center and
16 school of medicine in Boston; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. Arora joined the university of New Mexico
18 hospital faculty in 1993 as gastroenterology section chief and
19 built clinical systems for the region's underserved patients;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, project ECHO grew out of Dr. Arora's frustration
22 with being unable to help the thousands of New Mexicans
23 suffering from hepatitis C; and

24 WHEREAS, in 2003, over twenty-eight thousand New Mexicans
25 had a hepatitis C diagnosis, yet fewer than five percent

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1 received treatment because not enough specialists were equipped
2 to administer best-practice treatment for the disease; and

3 WHEREAS, the knowledge necessary to treat and even cure
4 hepatitis C existed but was not available in many communities;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Dr. Arora and his team connected a team of
7 specialists at the university of New Mexico hub with community
8 clinicians across the state, by video conference, for mentoring
9 and guided practice to treat hepatitis C patients; and

10 WHEREAS, eighteen months after project ECHO launched, wait
11 time at the university of New Mexico clinic fell to two weeks,
12 and in 2011, the ECHO team published results showing that ECHO-
13 trained clinicians gave patients the same level of hepatitis C
14 care as the university of New Mexico specialists provided; and

15 WHEREAS, seventeen years later, Dr. Arora and his team at
16 the ECHO institute provide training and technical assistance
17 and support to hundreds of global partners; and

18 WHEREAS, the ECHO institute team has raised over one
19 hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) to train over six
20 hundred partner organizations around the world; and

21 WHEREAS, the federal Expanding Capacity for Health
22 Outcomes Act, enacted in 2016, and the proposed Expanding
23 Capacity for Health Outcomes Act of 2019 confirmed federal
24 commitment to funding organizations using the ECHO model to
25 respond to areas of national need, such as the opioid and

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1 immigration health crises; and

2 WHEREAS, the United States department of defense and the
3 United States department of veterans affairs use ECHO programs,
4 as do organizations in forty-eight states in the United States,
5 as well as the United Kingdom, Australia, India and other
6 countries; and

7 WHEREAS, since 2011, over two hundred peer-reviewed
8 publications have documented project ECHO's effectiveness; and

9 WHEREAS, under Dr. Arora's leadership, the ECHO institute
10 team, its hundreds of partners and thousands of providers who
11 participate in ECHO programs make up the global ECHO movement,
12 all committed to tipping the scales of health care disparities
13 for the world's most vulnerable populations; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. Arora's transformative work is worthy of
15 consideration for the Nobel prize in physiology or medicine;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, the right to submit proposals for the Nobel prize
18 in physiology or medicine is set out in the statutes of the
19 Nobel foundation and provides for the following:

20 A. holders of established posts as full professors
21 at the faculties of medicine in Sweden and holders of similar
22 posts at the faculties of medicine or similar institutions in
23 Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway; and

24 B. holders of similar posts at fewer than six other
25 faculties of medicine at universities around the world,

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1 selected by the Nobel assembly, with a view to ensuring the
2 appropriate distribution of the task among various countries;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, a full professor at the university of New Mexico
5 health sciences center may be entitled to nominate a candidate,
6 with the provision that nominations from fewer than six
7 faculties of medicine would be considered and the faculty would
8 have to be selected by the Nobel assembly;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
10 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the dean of the school of medicine,
11 office of the chancellor of the university of New Mexico health
12 sciences center, be requested to nominate Sanjeev Arora, M.D.,
13 for the Nobel prize in physiology or medicine; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
15 transmitted to the dean of the school of medicine, office of
16 the chancellor of the university of New Mexico health sciences
17 center.