MINUTES
of the
SIXTH MEETING
of the
LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

October 19-21, 2026
Presbyterian Rust Medical Center
2400 Unser Boulevard SE
Rio Rancho

The sixth meeting of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee was called to order by Representative Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson, chair, on Monday, October 19, 2026, at 9:24 a.m. at Presbyterian Rust Medical Center in Rio Rancho.

Present
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson, Chair
Sen. Linda M. López, Vice Chair
Rep. Eleanor Chávez
Rep. Pamelya Herndon
Rep. Jenifer Jones
Sen. Larry R. Scott
Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez

Absent
Sen. Jay C. Block

Advisory Members
Rep. Marianna Anaya
Rep. John Block (10/20, 10/21)
Rep. Kathleen Cates
Sen. Katy Duhigg (10/19)
Sen. David M. Gallegos (10/19)
Rep. Miguel P. García (10/19, 10/20)
Sen. Martin Hickey (10/19)
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto (10/19, 10/21)
Sen. Harold Pope
Rep. E. Diane Torres-Velásquez (10/21)
Sen. Rex Wilson (10/19)
Rep. Christine Chandler
Sen. Angel M. Charley
Rep. Nicole Chavez
Rep. Anita Gonzales
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Rep. Elaine Sena Cortez
Rep. Sarah Silva
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics
Rep. Reena Szczepanski

(Attendance dates are noted for those members not present for the entire meeting.)

Staff
Zander Dawson, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Ian Keller, Staff Attorney, LCS
Grace Balderamos, Staff, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

References to Webcast

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Monday, October 19

Welcome and Introductions (9:24 a.m.)

Representative Thomson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members introduced themselves.

Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) New MexiCare Update (9:27 a.m.)

Emily Kaltenbach, secretary, ALTSD, and Angelica Flores-Montoya, deputy secretary, ALTSD, provided an update on the demographics and outcomes of the New MexiCare program and provided recommendations for the future. They reviewed happenings at and short-term goals for the ALTSD. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=1.

Overdose Prevention Overview (10:36 a.m.)

Brandon Marshall, Royce Family professor of teaching excellence and professor, Department of Epidemiology, Brown University School of Public Health, and Abdullah Shihipar, M.P.H., research associate, Department of Epidemiology, Brown University School of Public Health, discussed overdose prevention centers, including services offered, participant outcomes, public perception and public policy in various states. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=2.

Approval of Minutes (11:36 a.m.)

Upon a motion made and seconded, and without any objections, the committee approved the minutes of the September 28-October 1, 2026 meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Improving Regulation of the Practice of Medicine (12:59 p.m.)

Dick Mason, member, Medical Board Roundtable, Patient Safety Action Network; Carol Cronin, chair, Medical Board Roundtable, Patient Safety Action Network; Robert E. Oshel, Ph.D., former associate director for research and disputes, National Practitioner Data Bank; and Lisa McGiffert, member, Leadership Committee, Patient Safety Action Network, discussed the importance of statewide medical boards and the New Mexico Medical Board's adequacy in protecting the public. They reviewed the Medical Board's website and discussed what information can be found about New Mexico doctors there. They provided comparisons of actions taken by the New Mexico Medical Board with other state medical boards. The presenters also discussed their recommendations to improve accountability of the Medical Board. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=3.

Private Equity (2:19 p.m.)

Chris Noble, policy director, Private Equity Stakeholder Project, discussed the Private Equity Stakeholder Project and the scope of the project's work. Mr. Noble provided an overview of private equity, broadly summarized how private equity firms operate and discussed private equity's impact on the economy in New Mexico. Mr. Noble also discussed how private equity activity impacts labor, the climate, child care and housing across the United States. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=4.

Psychedelic-Assisted Therapy (3:15 p.m.)

Larry Leeman, M.D., University of New Mexico (UNM) Group Psilocybin-Assisted Therapy Study, provided an update on UNM's psychedelic-assisted therapy research and the unrolling of the state's medical psilocybin program. Crystal Romero, retired master sergeant, United States Army, and peer psilocybin facilitator, UNM Group Psilocybin-Assisted Therapy Study, shared her personal experience with medical psilocybin. Snehal Bhatt, M.D., director of addiction psychiatry, UNM, discussed research findings related to psilocybin-assisted therapy. Denali Wilson, director of strategic support in New Mexico, Healing Advocacy, reviewed potential legislative action to support the state's medical psilocybin program. Dominick Zurlo, director, Center for

Medical Cannabis and Psilocybin, Department of Health (DOH), briefly spoke about psilocybin regulation. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=5.

Investments in Housing Growth (4:22 p.m.)

Josh Chaffin, program evaluator, Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), and Alma Kassim, program evaluator, LFC, reviewed an LFC progress report about nonrecurring housing appropriations, which addressed housing affordability and regulatory constraints related to financing and production. Mr. Chaffin discussed how nonrecurring appropriations impacted housing production. Ms. Kassim discussed LFC's first finding, which indicates the state cannot consistently show what the state's recent housing investments produced. Mr. Chaffin presented LFC's second finding that local regulatory barriers constrain housing production despite the state's recent investments.

Sarita Nair, secretary, Workforce Solutions Department, discussed challenges to housing affordability. Secretary Nair presented data regarding affordability gaps that low-income renters face and the share of households at each income level across the state. She discussed the current production of affordable housing units and the projected need by 2045. Secretary Nair also provided recommendations to improve affordability conditions and streamline permitting for housing. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=6.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 5:12 p.m.

Tuesday, October 20

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:09 a.m.

Health Council Update (10:13 a.m.)

Valeria Alarcón, executive director, New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils, and Gerilyn Antonio, tribal liaison, New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils, discussed the work of health councils and highlighted progress since 2019. Ms. Alarcón noted new challenges health councils face for severe weather events and outlined the need for annual funding from the state. Ms. Antonio discussed thirteen priorities, which include assisting with implementing a state health improvement plan. She also discussed changes in program funding since 2021. Ms. Alarcón discussed the scope of work for fiscal year 2027. Ms. Alarcón and Ms. Antonio shared impact data and outlined the

funding request for the New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=7.

New Mexico Dental Association Update (10:13 a.m.)

Tom Schripsema, D.D.S, executive director, New Mexico Dental Association, presented on issues the New Mexico Dental Association faces, including a loss of approximately ten percent of the dentists in the state over the past ten years. He highlighted challenges in providing services to rural areas and in cultivating staff for the dental workforce. Dr. Schripsema summarized challenges surrounding dental practices relying on Medicaid and presented data comparing Medicaid prices to standard prices charged around the state. He also compared these data to neighboring states. He provided his recommendations for legislative changes, including a task force to recommend institutional changes. He also discussed the need for dental malpractice reform.

Quinn Lopez, general counsel, Delta Dental of New Mexico, discussed the challenges in providing dental insurance and the dentist workforce issues in New Mexico. He discussed challenges to practices that serve rural and frontier communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=8.

Reimbursement for Behavioral Health-Related Laboratory Services (11:22 a.m.)

Tiffany Wynn, Ph.D., L.P.C.C., Turquoise Trail Counseling; Orus Guerra, president and chief executive officer, Southwest Labs; Randle Adair, D.O., Ph.D., addiction medicine consultant, Opioid Remediation Collaborative of New Mexico, and clinical consultant, Southwest Labs; Jeremy Lihte, director, New Mexico Leaders in Recovery; and Paul Tucker, M.S., L.A.D.A.C., owner and founder, Turning Point Recovery Center, discussed challenges with receiving reimbursement for behavioral health services from managed care organizations (MCOs). Dr. Adair presented about challenges and shortcomings in drug screening. The presenters discussed shortcomings surrounding the scope of testing and reimbursement for lab testing services. They proposed that reimbursement for lab testing be uniform among MCOs and discussed potential shortcomings in practices by individual MCOs and a need for the Health Care Authority to regulate testing in the industry. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=9.

Medication-Assisted Treatment in DOH Offices (1:00 p.m.)

John Valdez, Ph.D., program evaluator, LFC, presented findings from an evaluation of medication-assisted treatment in public health offices. He presented recommendations for the DOH to implement medication-assisted outpatient treatment for vulnerable populations across the state. He discussed current progress in implementing this treatment by the DOH and the Health Care Authority and summarized recommendations for collaboration between the two agencies. Dr. Valdez presented the LFC's recommendations regarding outreach and referrals, in-office pharmacies, mobile clinics and local collaboratives.

Gina DeBlassie, secretary, DOH, and Kevin Peine, Ph.D., director, Public Health Division, DOH, summarized services addressing substance use provided by the DOH. Dr. Peine provided an update on clients served within the DOH's public health offices, including new and existing patients.

Miranda Durham, M.D., chief medical officer, DOH, discussed services addressing substance use across the state. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=10.

Prescribing Medication-Assisted Treatment for Adults (1:59 p.m.)

Eileen Barrett, M.D., M.P.H., chair, Public Health and Safety Advisory Committee, presented about access to treatment for opioid use disorder. Dr. Barrett summarized medications used to treat opioid use disorder, including methadone, buprenorphine and naltrexone. Dr. Barrett summarized barriers to treatment for opioid use disorder and proposed options for potential legislative action.

Obesity's Impact on New Mexico's Economy and Workforce (2:55 p.m.)

Tim Dall, executive director, Life Sciences Consulting, GlobalData, presented on the economic impacts to the state resulting from obesity. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=12.

Transitional Residential Rehabilitation Services (3:31 p.m.)

Gay Finlayson, education and outreach manager, Autism Programs, UNM Center for Development and Disability, and Patricia Osbourn, associate director, UNM Center for Development and Disability, discussed autism diagnostic services provided by the UNM Center for Development and Disability. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=13.

Public Comment (4:00 p.m.)

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:26 p.m.

Wednesday, October 21

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:09 a.m.

Communities in Schools Update (9:09 a.m.)

Michelle Katz, executive director, Communities in Schools New Mexico, and Alexandra Navarete, alumna, Communities in Schools New Mexico, presented on the work that Communities in Schools does for students in New Mexico. Ms. Katz discussed the organization's scope of work in assisting students succeed and graduate high school and requested funding. Ms. Navarete discussed her experience with the program and described how the mentorship she received helped her succeed. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=14.

Prescribing Medication-Assisted Treatment for Youth and Families (9:54 a.m.)

Francheska Gurule, M.D., associate professor, UNM Department of Family and Community Medicine, and Samira Rashid, D.N.P., M.S.N., F.N.P.-C., P.M.H.N.P., medical director, UNM ADOBE Program, presented about perinatal substance use clinics. They discussed medications for opioid use disorder and provided an overview of the three programs providing treatment and support for families impacted by substance abuse and trauma. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=15.

Presbyterian Health Systems Update (10:57 a.m.)

Darren Shafer, D.O., president, Presbyterian Medical Group; Angela Gallegos-Macias, M.D., chief medical officer, Presbyterian Healthcare Services; and Todd Oberheu, vice president, Operations, Presbyterian Regional Delivery System, presented an update on the Presbyterian health system. Dr. Gallegos-Macias noted new challenges the state faces regarding its aging population and noted increases in the complexity of patient presentations. She provided updates on facility expansion

intended to increase capacity. Mr. Oberheu discussed challenges in delivering services to rural areas. He discussed hospitals and local clinics that Presbyterian operates in rural communities. He shared that a new cardiology unit has been added in Clovis, facilities are being upgraded in Socorro and a medical helicopter pad will be completed soon in Lincoln County. Mr. Oberheu also discussed how anticipated changes in Medicare policies will be addressed in rural areas. He also provided an update on immediate changes resulting from passage of House Bill 99 (2026), including an increase in physician coverage in rural areas compared with prior years. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=16.

Addressing Disengaged Youth and Gateway Center Expansions (11:57 a.m.)

Jodie Esquibel, director, Albuquerque Community Safety, City of Albuquerque; Jasmine Desiderio, deputy director, Violence Intervention Program, Albuquerque Community Safety, City of Albuquerque; and Jeffery Bustamante, community outreach manager, Albuquerque Community Safety, City of Albuquerque, summarized the City of Albuquerque's current response system and discussed expanding the city's school-based violence intervention program.

Gilbert Ramirez, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., director, Health, Housing and Homelessness Department, City of Albuquerque; Lisa Glow, J.D., executive director, Gateway System of Care, Health, Housing and Homelessness Department, City of Albuquerque; Jordan Barela, deputy director of housing, Health, Housing and Homelessness Department, City of Albuquerque; and Charlie Verploegh, Ph.D., deputy director, Health, Housing and Homelessness Department, City of Albuquerque, presented updates on the Gateway Center. They outlined the services they provide for homeless New Mexico residents and summarized their proposals for state funding to expand services. The presentation materials can be found here:

https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=10/19/2026&ItemNumber=17.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.