

**MINUTES
of the
FIFTH MEETING
of the
LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**September 10-12, 2025
Villanueva Victory Club
Stan Fulton Athletic Center
New Mexico State University
1815 Wells Street
Las Cruces**

The fifth meeting of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee was called to order by Representative Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson, chair, on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 9:16 a.m. at the Villanueva Victory Club at the Stan Fulton Athletic Center at New Mexico State University (NMSU) in Las Cruces.

Present

Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson, Chair (9/10, 9/11)
Sen. Linda M. López, Vice Chair (9/10, 9/11)
Rep. Pamela Herndon
Rep. Jenifer Jones (9/12)

Absent

Sen. Jay C. Block
Rep. Eleanor Chávez
Sen. Larry R. Scott
Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez

Advisory Members

Rep. Marianna Anaya (9/10, 9/11)
Rep. John Block (9/11, 9/12)
Rep. Kathleen Cates (9/11, 9/12)
Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary
Rep. Anita Gonzales (9/12)
Rep. Tara L. Lujan (9/10)
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto (9/10, 9/11)
Sen. Harold Pope
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero (9/11, 9/12)
Rep. E. Diane Torres-Velásquez (9/10, 9/11)

Rep. Christine Chandler
Sen. Angel M. Charley
Rep. Nicole Chavez
Sen. Katy Duhigg
Sen. David M. Gallegos
Rep. Miguel P. García
Sen. Martin Hickey
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
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)
Andrea Lazarow, Bill Drafter, 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.

Wednesday, September 10

Welcome and Introductions (9:16 a.m.)

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

NMSU Program Updates (9:19 a.m.)

Rick Marlatt, dean, College of Health, Education and Social Transformation, NMSU, provided an overview of the college's programs, student demographics, research centers and student experiential learning. Alexa Doig, Ph.D., R.N., director, School of Nursing, NMSU, presented about the School of Nursing's Doctor of Nursing Practice - Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=1>.

Food Security (11:06 a.m.)

RubyAnn Esquibel, principal analyst, Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), and Alma Kassim, program evaluator, LFC, reviewed rates of food insecurity and federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation, the Public Education Department's (PED's) Healthy Universal School Meals program, state funding to address food insecurity and potential impacts on and changes to SNAP resulting from the 2025 federal budget reconciliation bill. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=2>.

Public Comment (12:10 p.m.)

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

LFC Program Evaluations (1:37 p.m.)

Sarah Rovang, Ph.D., program evaluator, LFC, and Ryan Tolman, Ph.D., program evaluator, LFC, explained findings and recommendations from the LFC's June 2025 progress report regarding pre-kindergarten quality and educational outcomes. Elizabeth Groginsky, secretary, Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), discussed student demographics and funding and goals for expanding access to and improving state-funded pre-kindergarten programs. Dr. Tolman and Josh Chaffin, program evaluator, LFC, reviewed findings and recommendations from the LFC's August 2025 evaluation of the Healthy Universal School Meals program. Gregory Frostad, assistant secretary of education, PED, and Laura Henry-Hand, deputy director, Student Success and Wellness Bureau, PED, highlighted the success of the Healthy Universal School Meals program and the PED's plans for the program's future. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=3>.

LifeHouse: An Update on Providing Behavioral Health Services in a Rural Setting (3:21 p.m.)

Philip Huston, executive director, Carlsbad LifeHouse, Inc., gave an update on services provided by Carlsbad LifeHouse, Inc. and discussed the climate of behavioral health and substance abuse services in rural southern New Mexico. He discussed challenges faced by providers of those services and offered legislative recommendations that could reduce barriers to accessing mental health care in rural settings. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=4>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:04 p.m.

Thursday, September 11

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:10 a.m.

Welcome to NMSU (9:11 a.m.)

Valerio Ferme, president, NMSU, welcomed the committee to NMSU, highlighted mental health services available to students and described initiatives to prevent sexual assault. He discussed campus safety and resources for students who struggle with substance abuse and food insecurity.

Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine (BCOM) Update (9:50 a.m.)

John L. Hummer, co-founder, president and chief executive officer, BCOM, spoke about the BCOM's funding sources, student demographics, student debt, residencies matched into by BCOM graduates and common careers of BCOM graduates. He addressed challenges faced by

the school, including the state's medical malpractice climate and difficulty retaining graduates in New Mexico.

Opioid Settlement Funds: Dona Ana County (10:30 a.m.)

Jamie Michael, director, Health and Human Services, Dona Ana County, described the expenditure of opioid settlement funds for behavioral health and substance abuse services in Dona Ana County and stated that the county often collaborates with the City of Las Cruces to provide such services. The county hopes to implement universal screening to identify opioid use disorder in its early stages among residents, increase access to naloxone and improve access to medication for opioid use disorders in rural and Spanish-speaking communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=7>.

Public Comment (11:26 a.m.)

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

New Mexico Dental Association (12:40 p.m.)

Tom Schripsema, D.D.S., executive director, New Mexico Dental Association, described the landscape of dentistry in New Mexico, including dental workforce trends and the difficulties of recruiting dentists to New Mexico, especially in rural areas. He presented findings and recommendations of the New Mexico Dental Association Foundation's 2025 report on special needs dentistry in the state, provided an update on Touro College of Dental Medicine's clinic in Albuquerque and discussed barriers to dental care in rural areas and among people with special needs. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=8>.

Hospital Finance 101 (2:19 p.m.)

Harry Rommel, Ph.D., fiscal analyst, LFC, reviewed revenues and expenditures of hospitals in New Mexico and explained metrics of hospital fiscal health. He provided a time line of changes to Medicaid resulting from the 2025 federal budget reconciliation bill and explained how those changes could impact hospitals. Dr. Rommel shared revenue estimates related to the Health Care Delivery and Access Act hospital budget projections for fiscal year 2025. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=9>.

Public Comment (3:16 p.m.)

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

Recess

The meeting recessed at 3:22 p.m.

Friday, September 12**Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 9:08 a.m.

Early Childhood Accountability Report (9:10 a.m.)

Allegra Hernandez, Ph.D., fiscal analyst, LFC, and Garrett Moseley, program evaluator, LFC, presented the LFC's biennial early childhood accountability report, which addressed child care assistance, pre-kindergarten outcomes, kindergarten readiness, early childhood spending and child welfare. Ms. Groginsky and Hailey Heinz, Ph.D., director of policy, research and quality initiatives, ECECD, discussed the ECECD's Family, Infant, Toddler and Home Visiting programs, early childhood care workforce wages and department goals. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=10>.

Head Start Programs in Southern New Mexico (10:31 a.m.)

Patricia Grovey Evans, president, New Mexico Head Start Association; Casey Lafferty, director, Head Start Collaboration Office, ECECD; and Alejandra Gonzalez, lead coordinator, Dona Ana County Early Childhood Education Coalition, shared the Head Start Collaboration Office's 2025 needs assessment and discussed local Head Start program demographics, resources for families and family support specialists. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=11>.

New Mexico Health Care Expenditures Data Needs (11:30 a.m.)

Kramer Winingham, D.E.D., program director, Arrowhead Center, NMSU, and Suzan Reagan, senior program manager, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico, presented the Bureau of Business and Economic Research and Arrowhead Center's January 2025 report about strategies for implementing and maintaining a state health care expenditure database. They discussed similar databases in other states and the role that the Department of Health's All Payer Claims Database could play in developing an expenditure database for New Mexico. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/10/2025&ItemNumber=12>.

Public Comment (12:04 p.m.)

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.