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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT



SPONSOR: McSorley DATE TYPED: 2/11/02 HB _____

SHORT TITLE: Study Full Health Care for Immigrants SB SJM 70

ANALYST: Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY02	FY03	FY02	FY03		
		\$0.1	See Narrative		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From

Health Policy Commission (HPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 70 requests the Health Policy Commission to study issues inhibiting the University of New Mexico Hospital from providing complete medical services to all in need of care, specifically undocumented immigrants. In its study the Health Policy Commission is to consider the use of county indigent funds to ensure healthcare for all New Mexico residents.

Significant Issues

SJM 70 is a follow-up study to SJM 52 (2001), which studied the availability of health care services to immigrants. The Department of Health was the lead agency and conducted the SJM 52 study in collaboration with the Health Policy Commission and the Human Services Department

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SJM 70 does not include an appropriation to support this study. HPC expresses concern that the proposed budget reductions in HAFC CS/HB 2 will somewhat limit the scope of the HPC's participation, particularly in the Agency's ability to contract work in support of this Memorial.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

See fiscal implications above.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The Department of Health, in collaboration with the Health Policy Commission and the Human Services Department, conducted a thorough study of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 on access to health care and public benefits for immigrants in New Mexico.

Among the findings of the study was that, although immigrants are eligible for basic and primary health care services through a variety of safety net health care providers in New Mexico, emergency care remains a regular source of care for many who have no regular physician and no health insurance.

The Legislative Health and Human Services Committee heard testimony from the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center that it does not enroll undocumented immigrants in its primary, managed care program, "UNM Cares", due to legal and financial considerations, thereby increasing the likelihood that immigrants will continue to receive their care in emergency room settings.

The University does provide emergency, urgent, immunization and communicable disease services to all who come to the University of New Mexico Hospital, but those who seek care for other medical or chronic conditions must do so at nongovernmental facilities or federally qualified health clinics.

The University of New Mexico receives support for funding Indigent Health Care Services from Bernalillo County, but does not receive consistent, sufficient indigent funding from other counties, despite the fact that the University serves indigent populations, including immigrants, statewide.

According to the Senate Joint Memorial 52 Report, New Mexico's immigrant population numbers about 129,000, with about 37,000 undocumented immigrants, mostly from Mexico.

HPC reports that contrary to widespread opinions immigrants do contribute to taxes. They pay gross receipts taxes, and according to the Social Security Administration, immigrant families in a lifetime pay an estimated \$80,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits from all government agencies. Because of cost, language and cultural barriers, and fear of apprehension by immigration authorities, illegal immigrants underutilize health services, especially preventive services such as prenatal care, dental care, immunizations, and health supervision. They also often delay seeking care for minor conditions until those conditions become more serious.

BD/njw