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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: SFC DATE TYPED: 3/6/03 HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE: Statewide Information & Referral Task Force SB CS/422/SPACS/SFCS

ANALYST: Dunbar

### APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
			Indeterminate See Narrative		

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates House Bill 537.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)  
 Health Policy Commission (HPC)  
 State Agency on Aging (SAA)  
 NM Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons  
 Department of Labor (DOL)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

The Senate Finance Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 422 creates a statewide task force to develop a statewide information and referral plan, using a 211-telephone number for access to health and human services. The task force will be located in the developmental disabilities planning council

#### Significant Issues

The task force includes representative from Department of Health (DOH), Human Services Department (HSD) Agency on Aging, the long-term care link program, Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD) Department of Labor (DOL) and the Governor's Committee on Concerns for the Handicapped, Commission for the Blind, the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of

Hearing, a statewide organization that raises money for health and human services purposes and other interested parties.

DOH reports that there is a need for a comprehensive health and human services referral and information resource system. According to the Dona Ana County Advocates for Children, Youth and Families, this system has been implemented in 20% of the states in the U.S. The system works well when there are such events as September 11, 2001. Additionally, the system is beneficial when regional catastrophes occur, such as hurricanes, tornadoes or earthquakes. The system is in place to receive calls that relate to questions such as where individuals can find housing, clothing, food and other essential items during an emergency.

DOH indicates that there is an existing effort underway to develop a broader web-based Public Health Division (PHD) resource directory for information and referral.

The State Agency on Aging reports that several cities, including Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Santa Fe, are developing "211" information systems. To date, the cities have not developed a plan to coordinate the systems.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

Agencies will be required to absorb the costs of developing the information and referral plan an existing budgets since the bill does not have an appropriation.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

Agencies note that participation in the task force will require significant staff time.

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

A 211 system could be a single point of entry into a statewide information and referral system. This approach could be a partial solution to the fragmented nature of health and human services systems, which at present can make access extremely difficult. Such a system has been implemented in 20% of the states in the U.S. The system could be used routinely as well as in emergency situations.

Nationally, 211 information and referral systems have been found to decrease non-emergency calls on 911 emergency lines. Such a system might also reduce the burden of non-emergency visits to emergency rooms. This could reduce the burden on the emergency medical system, as well as the associated costs.

According to DOH, there may be significant benefits from a 211 general information and referral system. However, a 211 phone line would have serious limitations in the event of an emergency, since phone lines might be overloaded or down. In addition, in New Mexico many people do not have ready access to a telephone. A telephone-based system would require considerable attention to the infrastructure. It would be advisable for SB 422 to require that the task force address these problems, especially if emergency planning is seen as part of its mission.