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1           WHEREAS, head start and early head start programs are  
2 mandated by federal performance standards to address the oral  
3 health care needs of the children and pregnant women they  
4 serve; and

5           WHEREAS, a comprehensive early childhood caries program  
6 should include the extension of dental benefits to all women of  
7 child-bearing age; and

8           WHEREAS, childhood caries, the causative agent of which is  
9 "streptococcus mutans", is the most prevalent form of disease  
10 in early childhood; and

11           WHEREAS, dental sealants can only be applied to children  
12 aged six to seven years or older, must be applied by a dentist  
13 or qualified dental hygienist and require special equipment;  
14 and

15           WHEREAS, an innovative fluoride varnish program has been  
16 implemented that protects infants' and toddlers' teeth as soon  
17 as they erupt, requires no special equipment and can be applied  
18 by trained non-dental providers; and

19           WHEREAS, an early childhood caries program includes the  
20 application of fluoride varnish, fosters prevention and  
21 improves dental health education during well-child check-ups;  
22 and

23           WHEREAS, numerous entities engaged in the provision of  
24 dental services and dental education have expressed interest in  
25 implementing such a program in New Mexico;

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1           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
2 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the university of New Mexico health  
3 sciences center division of dental services be requested to  
4 create a task force to coordinate efforts to develop a  
5 comprehensive early childhood caries program; and

6           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that head start and early head  
7 start programs, the department of health, the New Mexico board  
8 of dental health care, the children, youth and families  
9 department, a statewide voluntary council addressing oral  
10 health issues and other groups with expertise in childhood  
11 dental care be included in the task force; and

12           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force examine and  
13 evaluate known fluoride varnish projects and develop  
14 recommendations regarding training costs, data collection needs  
15 and desired outcomes for children; and

16           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report  
17 recommendations to the interim legislative health and human  
18 services committee at its October 2003 meeting; and

19           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
20 transmitted to the university of New Mexico health sciences  
21 center division of dental services, head start and early head  
22 start programs, the university of New Mexico dental services,  
23 the department of health, the New Mexico board of dental health  
24 care, the children, youth and families department, a statewide,  
25 voluntary council addressing oral health issues and other

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groups with expertise in childhood dental care.