

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE CHILDREN'S CABINET TO OVERSEE AN IMMEDIATE EFFORT TO CREATE A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO PROTECTING AND CARING FOR CHILDREN FOUND IN A METHAMPHETAMINE PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT.

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WHEREAS, the illegal use and abuse of methamphetamine in New Mexico is a serious concern; and

WHEREAS, the materials used in the production of methamphetamine may be seriously harmful to humans, especially to young children; and

WHEREAS, many people engaged in illegal methamphetamine use and production are parents; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is committed to protecting its children; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of factual public information of the possible dangers associated with methamphetamine production; and

WHEREAS, it is important to identify and quantify the health hazards to innocent bystanders; and

WHEREAS, the effects of inhaling harmful substances on developing respiratory systems is still unknown; and

WHEREAS, the best interest of children, including their physical health and mental health needs, must be of primary importance in immediate response and treatment; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to identify primary methamphetamine manufacturers while separating unknowing bystanders or innocent victims; and

WHEREAS, children need the stability of their family and every attempt must be made to keep children safely at home; and

WHEREAS, parents must be given the resources to protect their children; and

WHEREAS, today there is no single coordinated statewide protocol among law enforcement, child welfare, community and health responder agencies and other organizations to ensure that an exposed child receive immediate and "best practices" treatment and resources to safeguard that child's health, family and future; and

WHEREAS, the responses to this complex problem must be multidisciplinary, logical and humane; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a standing children's cabinet dedicated to creating a bright and healthy future for children and families;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the children's cabinet be requested to immediately assemble a working task force of all the appropriate agencies to develop and oversee implementation of a "best practices" coordinated multidisciplinary approach to safeguard children found in a methamphetamine production environment or believed to be exposed to methamphetamine ingredients; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that participants include the department of public safety, the children, youth and families department, the department of health, the academy of pediatrics, children's mental health professionals, shelter care agencies, including domestic violence and homeless shelters, relevant social service providers, foster parents, child advocates and representatives of law

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enforcement agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force produce and implement a detailed coordinated protocol for determining the immediate physical and mental health status needs of such children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that recommendations include an analysis of the specific number of children exposed and report the extent of the health hazards and effects on all persons who may be exposed to or living in the immediate residential environment of the methamphetamine manufacturing process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force develop and the responsible agencies identify community housing alternatives and follow-up resources for children and their parents, and provide special training for foster parents who may be requested to accept children exposed to the methamphetamine manufacturing process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a report be made at the October 2004 meeting of the interim legislative health and human services committee and the interim corrections oversight and justice committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the children's cabinet issue a public report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the children's cabinet, the department of health, the department of public safety, the children, youth and families department and law enforcement agencies statewide.

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