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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Gutierrez DATE TYPED 3/7/2005 HB HJM 101

SHORT TITLE Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness SB _____

ANALYST Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	NFI				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

NM Public Education Department (NMPED)

Human Services Department (HSD)

Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Joint Memorial 101 directs the state of New Mexico to recognize the issue of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and promotes the viewing of “Gary and the Angels” film to increase awareness and education of FAS, and with the goal of reducing of FAS. State agencies would direct staff to facilitate viewing of the film.

Significant Issues

FAS is a leading cause of birth defects. The problems associated with FAS include a spectrum of physical anomalies exhibited in children, as well as the fact that it is a major cause of mental retardation and developmental disabilities (Institute of Medicine, 1996). The prevention of FAS is totally dependent upon a pregnant woman’s decision whether or not to consume alcohol during pregnancy; male consumption of alcohol does not affect the incidence of FAS. Unfortunately pregnant women often do not receive information regarding the dangers of alcohol consumption during gestation and many do not understand that alcohol should be avoided completely. The

prevalence of FAS in New Mexico is 1 per 1,000 births. Children with FAS are often recipients of the child protective services system and in special education, although a diagnosis of FAS may not be noted. Over the past twenty years, FAS has affected some communities in New Mexico more than others. Past research indicates that FAS was prevalent among Native American populations in the early 1980s, with as many as 2 per 1,000 births affected. This rate has been reduced substantially due to the efforts of CASAA and its community partners.

FAS is difficult to diagnose and establishing the prevalence has been a real challenge for researchers. Three major methods are used to diagnose FAS: 1) hospital birth registries; 2) clinic based interventions; and 3) active case ascertainment. These methods require coordination among a variety of providers as well as appropriate funding. HJM 101 would require the state to recognize FAS as an issue, which has been accomplished. HJM 101 provides opportunity for appropriate state agencies and providers to develop additional strategies to further reduce the prevalence of FAS through prevention activities.

The University of New Mexico Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Addictions (CASAA) currently receives \$72,000 from the Department of Health to administer a statewide FAS prevention project; activities include educational services to high school students. CASAA also administers the *Graduation Reality and Dual-role Skills (GRADS)* Program for pregnant and parenting teens through federal funds. FAS prevention is a major part of the curriculum. HJM 101 would expand current educational efforts through the distribution of the “Gary and the Angels” video.

PED indicates that the department:

- can not promote or market a single product (“Gary and the Angels” video)
- must first preview the video before we recommend it to use for FAS prevention
- must know the target audience of the video to ensure age appropriateness
- has a policy for the adoption of instructional materials

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

New Mexico Medical Assistance Division (Comments)

There are no negative implications for Medicaid. Public education and outreach to promote awareness of FAS could be a positive step in helping women of child-bearing age be aware of FAS and its prevention.

New Mexico Public Education Department (Comments)

According to the New Mexico Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Active Case Ascertainment Study:

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a chronic yet preventable condition
- 1 of every 1000 children in New Mexico are affected by FAS
- children with FAS are frequently involved in Child Protective Services and Special Education
- 81% of women in New Mexico reported some knowledge of FAS, yet 19% feel that 1, 2 or more drinks a day will not harm a developing fetus.