

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 32

2 47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Bernadette M. Sanchez

5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO HEALTH POLICY COMMISSION TO STUDY THE  
12 IMPORTANCE OF AND THE BARRIERS TO MEETING THE NEED FOR  
13 RECRUITING AND RETAINING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF BILINGUAL  
14 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN NEW MEXICO.

15  
16 WHEREAS, the availability of bilingual behavioral health  
17 professionals in New Mexico, especially in rural areas, is  
18 severely limited; and

19 WHEREAS, an adequate number of bilingual behavioral health  
20 professionals is a critical determinant to meeting the  
21 behavioral health needs of the diverse population of New Mexico  
22 and to prevent or reduce the impact of substance abuse and  
23 mental illness in New Mexico communities; and

24 WHEREAS, in the next half-century, the United States is  
25 expected to see a significant rise in its Hispanic and other

.160787.1

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

underscored material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

1 ethnic cultures and populations; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico is already a very culturally diverse  
3 state with significant Hispanic, Native American and Asian  
4 populations; and

5 WHEREAS, New Mexico schools, hospitals and other mental  
6 health care providers are facing serious shortages of bilingual  
7 health care professionals; and

8 WHEREAS, there are many barriers to effective recruitment  
9 and retention of bilingual behavioral health professionals,  
10 including complex licensing and credentialing requirements,  
11 lack of training in the provision of culturally competent care  
12 and shortages of trained and experienced bilingual or  
13 multilingual professionals; and

14 WHEREAS, no adequate system currently exists to collect  
15 data to track the effect of bilingual behavioral health  
16 professional shortages on the mental health of New Mexicans;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, data regarding health disparities resulting from  
19 a shortage of bilingual behavioral health professionals is  
20 similarly lacking; and

21 WHEREAS, increased bilingual behavioral health  
22 professional recruitment and retention could result in reduced  
23 errors, increased patient safety and outcomes and improved job  
24 satisfaction for behavioral health professionals;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

.160787.1

underscoring material = new  
[bracketed material] = delete

1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico health policy  
2 commission be requested to conduct a study of the importance of  
3 and the barriers to meeting the need for recruiting and  
4 retaining an adequate supply of bilingual behavioral health  
5 professionals in New Mexico; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study address the impact  
7 of a shortage of bilingual health care professionals on the  
8 mental health of New Mexico residents; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting this study, the  
10 New Mexico health policy commission confer with the human  
11 services department, the department of health, statewide  
12 associations representing hospitals and health systems,  
13 statewide organizations representing behavioral health  
14 professionals and consumers and others with knowledge and  
15 expertise in the field of behavioral health; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico health policy  
17 commission submit a report of the study, including findings and  
18 recommendations, to the interim legislative health and human  
19 services committee by November 2006; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
21 transmitted to the New Mexico health policy commission.