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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/23/2007

SPONSOR Miera LAST UPDATED _____ HB 67

SHORT TITLE NM Highlands Medical-Health Interpreters SB _____

ANALYST McOlash

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$185.2	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Health Policy Commission (HPC)

Department of Health (DOH)

Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 67 appropriates \$185,180 from the General Fund to the Regents of New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) for expenditure in FY08 to establish a pilot training center for medical-health interpreters.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$185,180 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY08 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Federal Health and Human Services Department through the National Office of Minority Health produced the 14 Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards for

health care organizations in 2001. The CLAS Standards mandate culturally appropriate health care and services for clients who are not Linguistically English Proficient, and organizational support for incorporating the CLAS Standards for health care provided to non-English speaking patients/clients (DOH).

In recognition of this need, the DOH, in 2006, began providing bilingual medical interpreter training including sections on cultural competence to direct service staff and community-based providers in both Spanish and Navajo languages. In 2007, DOH will add an additional Spanish language contractor to train 75 additional DOH staff and direct service staff of other health care organizations.

This request was not on the list of priority projects submitted by NMHU to the Higher Education Department for review and was not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY08.

ALTERNATIVES

Higher education institutions receive indirect cost revenues from federal contracts and grants. This money is unrestricted in the sense that the governing board of the institution has the flexibility to choose which projects are supported with these funds. A great deal of this money is used as seed money to develop new research and public services projects at institutions. A portion of the indirect cost revenue, or earned overhead, is used to support items such as the salaries of the accountants responsible for monitoring the contracts and grants, or for paying utilities and other expenses required to maintain the space where the contract and grant activities are housed.

The higher education funding formula allows institutions to retain 100% of this indirect cost revenue. One of the purposes of retaining these funds is to provide seed money and matching funds for projects such as the one proposed in this bill.

BM/csd