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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/20/2007

SPONSOR Rodella LAST UPDATED _____ HB 881

SHORT TITLE Dental Hygienist Student Loan for Service SB _____

ANALYST McOlash

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB 242/SB 560 and SB 35.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)

Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 881 amends the Allied Health Student Loan for Service Act (Section 21-22C-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1994, Chapter 57, Section 5) to add “dental hygiene” to the definition of Allied Health Profession.

The bill also provides updating language by substituting the word “department” for the word “commission” to be consistent with the change from the Higher Education Commission to the Higher Education Department.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

New Mexico has a serious shortage of dental providers throughout the state. Twenty-six of the state’s 33 counties have been designated, in whole or in part, as Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (DHPSAs) by the federal government. The proposed addition of dental hygienists is designed to provide additional personnel to help meet this critical need.

House Bill 881 – Page 2

The Allied Health Loan for Service funds would be available to dental hygiene students to finance their educations and repay their loans with service in New Mexico.

The HED analysis indicates the University of New Mexico (UNM) and San Juan College (SJC) offer dental hygiene programs in New Mexico. Economically, the demand for dental hygienists continues to grow. There are dental assistant programs located at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell and the University of New Mexico-Gallup. The average annual income for dental hygienists is \$55,000.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 242/Senate Bill 560 enact the Dental Hygienist Student Loan for Service. The bills creates the Dental Hygienist Loan fund, establishes framework for hygienists' loans for service provided to the underserved areas in the state of New Mexico, mandates annual reporting of the program's status to the Executive and Legislature, and provides penalties for service loans in default. However, these bills carry no appropriation but create a new fund and provides for continuing appropriations.

House Bill 881 and HB 242 are not interchangeable. HB 242 is more comprehensive but would need appropriations to be of benefit to dental hygienists.

Senate Bill 35 appropriates \$1,530,000 for dental hygiene programs.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

In order to increase dental health care in rural areas, the Legislature passed the Collaborative Practices Dental Hygienists Act which allows dental hygienists to practice without general supervision by, but in a working relationship with, a licensed dentist.

The New Mexico Health Service Corps (NMHSC) provides stipends to health professionals in exchange for a commitment to work in underserved areas. Dental hygienists are eligible for, and participate in this DOH program.

BM/csd