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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/18/08

SPONSOR Ezzell LAST UPDATED _____ HB 46

SHORT TITLE CYFD Autistic Children Assistance SB _____

ANALYST Lucero

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$25.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: HB 63 which appropriates \$6,725,000 for services to persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to several state agencies.

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in General Appropriation Act: CYFD's base budget request includes \$20.0 in recurring funds for this program.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

Department of Health (CYFD)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 46 appropriates twenty-five thousand from the general fund to Children, Youth and Families to contract with a community-based organization in Dexter to increase social interactions for children and young adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and to provide training to staff and caregivers.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of twenty-five thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of 2009 shall

revert to the general fund.

This appropriation is not part of the Executive recommendation.

CYFD's base budget request includes twenty thousand in recurring funds for this program and is included in the HAFC approved budget for CYFD.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

In 2007 the Centers for Disease Control reportedly found that as many as 1 in 150 children in America today have an ASD.

There are children and youth with autism spectrum disorders in Chavez Country (Southwest Autism Network data).

Autism as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at 34.CFR § 300.8(c)(1)(i) means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities, and stereotyped movements, resistance to environment change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

According to data obtained on www.IDEAdata.org the number of students identified as having autism as defined above has been increasing steadily over the last three years. The chart below highlights New Mexico’s data compared to the national average. The percentage reflects the percent of students with autism as compared to all of the students with disabilities as defined by the IDEA.

Percent of New Mexico preschool students aged 3 – 5 identified as having autism	National average of the percent of preschool students aged 3 – 5 identified as having autism
2006 (0.14%)	2006 (0.29%)
2005 (0.12%)	2005 (0.25%)
2004 (0.09%)	2004 (0.22%)

Percent of New Mexico students aged 6 – 21 identified as having autism	National average of the percent of students aged 6 – 21 identified as having autism
2006 (0.13%)	2006 (0.34%)
2005 (0.11%)	2005 (0.29%)
2004 (0.09%)	2004 (0.25%)

The table below illustrates the latest number of students with autism reported by the school districts to the PED as of the 40th day counting period for the 2007 – 2008 school years.

AUTISM	
Ages 3-5	Ages 6-21
131	682

Although the average number of students in New Mexico with autism is below average, the numbers of students is steadily increasing each year.

One out of every 150 American eight-year-olds has some form of autism, meaning that 560,000 children in the country have the disorder, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In the 1990s, approximately 1-2 in 10,000 people nationwide were diagnosed with autism. Today, the disorder affects as many as 1 in 150.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD's mission focuses on delivering services to vulnerable children and families. This program is consistent with that mission.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

This bill does not allocate administrative resources for development or oversight of the contract. ValueOptions-New Mexico is responsible for oversight of the current contract funds.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to: HB 63 which appropriates \$6,725,000 for services to persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to several state agencies.

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in General Appropriation Act: CYFD's base budget request includes \$20.0 in recurring funds for this program.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The bill specifies the appropriation is intended to “contract with a community-based organization in Dexter.”

“Caregivers” is not defined.

The bill is unclear whether the services are restricted to CYFD clients or available to all ASD clients.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

CYFD has previously contracted with other community-based organizations to provide equine based therapy for children with autism. At this time, CYFD’s experience demonstrates that expansion of equine-based and related therapies for this population requires a scientific evaluation of the service and how it is best applied to meet the needs of this target population

The bill does not define an upper age limit for “young adults.”

Safety issues may preclude the inclusion of young children in this program.

Rural children in New Mexico do not have easy access to services for ASD. Rural areas have few professionals with the necessary training in autism services and little opportunity for training opportunities to increase skills.

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The appropriation proposed in HB 46 is not a part of the recommendations made as result of Senate Bill 197 passed in the 2007 legislative session which required the Human Services Department (HSD) to appoint a comprehensive group to study Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) services, the current systems that serve this population, and determine the most appropriate funding mechanisms to address ASD.

Department of Health (DOH) suggests that the Dexter community-based contractor coordinate services with other ASD services funded through DOH and HSD to prevent duplication or fragmentation of efforts in the Dexter area and assure that training content is consistent. The Department of Health currently provides services to children and adults with ASD, and both DOH and HSD facilitated the SB197 study that made recommendations as a result of the study.

ALTERNATIVES

The bill could be amended to have the funding appropriated to DOH instead of CYFD. DOH currently provides programming for autism.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Status quo.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

None at this time.

DL/nt