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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Komadina **ORIGINAL DATE** 01/16/08
LAST UPDATED 01/24/08 **HB** _____
SHORT TITLE Med School Recruitment of Rural Undergrads **SB** 7
ANALYST Hanika-Ortiz

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$250.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

- Department of Health (DOH)
- Health Policy Commission (HPC)
- New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 7 appropriates \$250 thousand from the General Fund to New Mexico Highlands University in FY09 to establish a demonstration and research program to prepare undergraduate students from small universities for successful entry into medical school or related fields. The programs include a focused undergraduate curriculum, summer science academies, remote learning, medical school entrance examination preparation and mentoring by rural physicians and physicians associated with the New Mexico Hispanic Medical Association.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$250 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY09 shall revert to the General Fund.

This funding request was not on the list of priority projects submitted by NMHU to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review and was not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY09.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

It is anticipated that the funding requested will help develop and grow the small existing pre-med program at the University and help meet the need for more medical professionals in rural areas of New Mexico. According to enrollment data submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department, in the Spring 2007 semester a total of 301 medical students were enrolled at UNM Medical School. Out of 301 students only ten of those students, which is approximately 3%, graduated from a smaller university in New Mexico. Two students graduated from New Mexico Highlands University, five graduated from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, and three graduated from Western New Mexico University.

HPC reports that a recent 2006 survey of physicians in New Mexico shows the majority (77%) of the active patient care physicians are white. Hispanic/Latino physicians made up the second most numerous group, representing about 11% of active patient care physicians. The remaining groups (American Indians/ Alaska Natives; Asians and Pacific Islanders; African-Americans; multiple race/ethnicities; and others) made up about 12% of the active patient care physician workforce in 2006.

The DOH reports that there is evidence that health care providers from small rural communities are more likely to return to similar communities to practice their profession. The difficulty in recruiting students from these communities to health career tracks is due, in part, to the limited availability of pre-professional courses in small school districts, and the lack of formal training opportunities for entrance exams. This approach may help increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the health care field working with racial and ethnic minorities living in rural areas of the state.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HPC notes that the Shortage Designation Branch in the HRSA Bureau of Health Professions National Center for Health Workforce Analysis develops shortage designation criteria and uses them to decide whether or not a geographic area or population group is a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) or Medically Underserved Population (MUP).

- HPSAs may have shortages of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers and may be urban or rural areas, population groups or medical or other public facilities.
- MUAs may be a whole county or a group of contiguous counties, a group of county or civil divisions or a group of urban census tracts in which residents have a shortage of personal health services.
- MUPs may include groups of persons who face economic, cultural or linguistic barriers to health care.

More than 34 federal programs depend on the shortage designation to determine eligibility or as a funding preference. About 20% of the U.S. population resides in primary medical care HPSAs. Every NM County, except Los Alamos County, has a type of shortage designation. Of the 33 NM counties 17 have whole county designation and three have partial or total low income designations.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The New Mexico Highlands University will need to seek other funding for this program.