

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO COLLABORATE ON A STUDY OF THE COST AND IMPACT OF CHRONIC DISEASE ON THE NEW MEXICO WORK FORCE AND THE POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT OF BUSINESS-BASED WELLNESS PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, chronic disease is known to lead to absenteeism and lost wages and contributes to higher health insurance premiums, with a combined result of a higher cost of doing business; and

WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and prevention acknowledges that the United States cannot effectively address the escalating cost of health care without addressing the problem of chronic disease; and

WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and prevention estimates that more than fifty percent of Americans have at least one chronic disease, accounting for up to seventy-five percent of the nation's health care costs, which currently exceed two trillion dollars (\$2,000,000,000,000); and

WHEREAS, arthritis, diabetes and obesity are prevalent chronic diseases or chronic conditions, the incidence of which are increasing; and

WHEREAS, the department of health reports that an

estimated four hundred fifteen thousand people in the state are afflicted with arthritis, costing more than six hundred eighty-six million dollars (\$686,000,000) per year in direct and indirect costs; and

WHEREAS, the department of health estimates that one hundred twenty thousand people in New Mexico have diabetes and that more than one in two adults with diabetes are overweight or obese and do not participate in regular exercise; and

WHEREAS, according to the department of health, fifty-seven percent of adults, twenty-four percent of high school students and twenty-two percent of low-income children who participate in federally funded food programs are overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, according to a report published by the Milken Institute titled *An Unhealthy America: The Economic Burden of Chronic Disease*, the economic burden of chronic disease in New Mexico will total twenty-four billion dollars (\$24,000,000,000) between 2003 and 2023 if nothing is done to address chronic disease; and

WHEREAS, the Milken Institute report estimates that New Mexico can save up to six billion dollars (\$6,000,000,000) of the twenty-four billion dollars (\$24,000,000,000) total economic burden by addressing chronic disease through such measures as reducing obesity, reducing smoking, increasing physical activity, reducing cholesterol levels and instituting

preventive medical care; and

WHEREAS, numerous businesses in New Mexico and the nation, including Astrazeneca, Johnson and Johnson, Don Chalmers Ford, New Mexico mutual and casualty, the Bell group and Sandia national laboratories, have demonstrated positive results and reductions in manifestations of chronic disease factors with implementation of business-based wellness programs; and

WHEREAS, these organizations report that they have improved their return on investments with their investment in business-based wellness programs; and

WHEREAS, broader opportunity exists to extend these positive results to businesses and to the state of New Mexico, resulting in healthier employees and cost savings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the economic development department be requested to collaborate on a study of the cost and impact of chronic disease on the New Mexico work force and the potential positive impact of business-based wellness programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify programs and projects, including business-based wellness programs, that could diminish the negative impact of chronic disease and improve the overall health of the population of the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and

recommendations of the study be presented to the interim legislative health and human services committee by November 1, 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretaries of health and economic development.