

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO COLLABORATE WITH THE NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO HOSPITAL TO STUDY THE FUNDING OF INDIGENT CARE AT THE HOSPITAL.

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico health sciences center has policies that ensure that indigent patients have access to resources to cover the cost of their care at the university of New Mexico hospital, regardless of their place of residence; and

WHEREAS, the total cost of uncompensated care at the hospital rose from more than one hundred thirty-seven million dollars (\$137,000,000) in fiscal year 2006 to more than one hundred sixty-one million dollars (\$161,000,000) in fiscal year 2008; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, according to the higher education department, more than fourteen million dollars (\$14,000,000) worth of uncompensated care at the hospital was provided to patients residing outside of Bernalillo county; and

WHEREAS, revenues to offset the cost of uncompensated care at the university of New Mexico hospital come from a variety of sources, including a Bernalillo county hospital mill levy, the county-supported medicaid fund, indigent funds funded by gross receipts taxes, appropriated out-of-county

indigent funding and charity, but these combined revenues are insufficient to cover the costs of uncompensated care; and

WHEREAS, property taxes in the form of a mill levy from the residents of Bernalillo county funded an estimated eighty-three million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$83,800,000) in uncompensated care in fiscal year 2008, comprising more than twenty percent of the total property tax collected; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico health policy commission has acknowledged, and the New Mexico association of counties agrees, that residents of Bernalillo county effectively subsidize care for indigent patients from other counties throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, more than twenty percent of the Bernalillo county hospital mill levy is spent on indigent care for out-of-county residents; and

WHEREAS, according to the Kaiser family foundation, twenty-three percent of New Mexico residents are uninsured, compared to a national rate of fifteen percent uninsured; and

WHEREAS, as the economic condition of the state and the nation continues to deteriorate, the number of people who are uninsured will predictably rise; and

WHEREAS, the burden on residents of Bernalillo county and the rest of the state of uncompensated care can likewise be predicted to increase, given historical experience and the current economic downturn; and

WHEREAS, the Bernalillo county hospital mill levy is not eligible for federal medicaid matching funds; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the state to ensure access to needed hospital services for all residents of the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department be requested to collaborate with the New Mexico association of counties and the university of New Mexico hospital to study the funding of indigent care at the university of New Mexico hospital; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study explore alternative funding mechanisms, including the potential for obtaining federal medicaid matching funds, that will reduce the burden on Bernalillo county taxpayers while retaining access to services at the university of New Mexico hospital for all New Mexico residents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the human services department consult with the higher education department, the university of New Mexico health sciences center and others, as appropriate, in conducting the study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a written report of the findings and recommendations of the study be presented to the interim legislative health and human services committee and the legislative finance committee by October 1, 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the human services department, the New Mexico association of counties and the university of New Mexico hospital.