

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/30/09

SPONSOR Morales LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Establish Office of Community Health Workers SB 214

ANALYST Hanika-Ortiz

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$175.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From  
Department of Health (DOH)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 214 appropriates \$175 thousand from the General Fund to the DOH to establish an Office of Community Health Workers (OCHW) that would develop statewide infrastructure and training for community health worker (CHW) services.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$175 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY10 shall revert to the General Fund.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

The appropriation is not included in the Executive Budget Request. The appropriation is expected to pay for two full-time dedicated employees (FTE), office equipment, travel, and supplies for the first fiscal year.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

DOH provided the following:

In 2003, the New Mexico Legislature adopted Senate Joint Memorial 76, which requested DOH to “lead a study on the development of a Community Health Advocacy Program in New Mexico, including the program’s methods, structure, financing, and implementation, that utilized various categories of community health advocates.” The resulting report, the *Senate Joint Memorial 76 Report on the Development of a Community Health Advocacy Program in New Mexico*, provided a comprehensive analysis of the contribution of CHWs to the health and stability of New Mexico communities and the potential for development of additional CHW programs in the state.

Based on a subsequent report completed in June of 2007, “New Mexico Community Health Worker: A Certification and Training Program”, (*Renée T. Despres, Ph.D.*) the New Mexico CHW Advisory Council presented DOH with the following recommendations: 1) Develop a standardized, statewide training program for community health workers; 2) Develop a certification process; and 3) Establish an OCHW within DOH to support these processes and recommendations.

In December 2008, DOH Secretary Alfredo Vigil, M.D. announced the initial steps towards the establishment of an OCHW for DOH. This new office is to be housed within the Health Systems Bureau of the Public Health Division. A primary responsibility for this office will be the development of a standardized, statewide training program and a certification process for community health workers. Community and advocate support for this initiative is strong. DOH is collaborating with the New Mexico CHW Association, New Mexico CHW Advisory Council, and a multitude of community advocates, agencies, universities, and providers.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

DOH reports that existing staff can be prepared to coordinate and oversee the early stages of development for the new OCHW.

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

DOH notes that community health workers, community health representatives, promotoras, and doulas are recognized as an essential part of cost- effective healthcare systems, help reduce health disparities, and help overcome barriers to health-care access by offering culturally and linguistically appropriate care to underserved communities.

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

An appropriation of \$175 thousand will not be made to DOH for an Office of Community Health Workers through this legislation.

AHO/svb