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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 03/04/09

SPONSOR Ortiz y Pino LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Acupuncture for Post-Traumatic Stress SM 31

ANALYST Varela

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	None		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY09	FY10	FY11	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)

Health Policy Commission (HPC)

Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 31 requests that the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) conduct a local study that assesses the efficacy of using acupuncture to treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and pain in New Mexico veterans. The study requires an analysis of the relationship between acupuncture treatment and the reduced need for medication, and an assessment to determine whether the use of low-cost acupuncture clinics eases the burden in medical facilities.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This memorial contains no appropriation. However, the request of this memorial will require the staff time and resources of DVS in order to complete the elements of the study.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

There is no timeline for completion of the study stated in the memorial.

According to HPC, SM 31 notes that U.S. soldiers are having different adverse effects from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars than from wars in the past, such as PTSD. PTSD is a debilitating and disruptive condition that often leads to the breakdown of relationships, psychiatric illnesses, and suicide. There are a few studies that have been conducted relating to the use of acupuncture as a mechanism to treat post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (including anxiety, insomnia, and depression) and pain; the studies indicated that acupuncture is a viable treatment modality.

The Walter Reed Army Medical Center conducted a study and found that acupuncture is a promising mechanism to effectively treat PTSD. Acupuncture has demonstrated the ability to improve the well-being of soldiers and has been successfully used to treat stress, anxiety, and pain conditions. Acupuncture is a simple low-cost procedure offering immediate and effective results, which compliments other conventional modalities such as counseling and medication. SM 31 asserts that the United States Air Force will begin to use battlefield acupuncture to help wounded and stressed soldiers.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HPC comments:

Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) started the Veterans Project as a result of their success in effectively treating Katrina victims with symptoms of PTSD. The Veterans Project is designed to encourage local volunteer acupuncture clinics to provide free community-style acupuncture to veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to their families. This is a nationwide initiative, focusing on the treatment of stress-related symptoms such as anxiety, sleep problems, irritability, hyper-vigilance, flashbacks, and mental fogginess, all of which can be indications of PTSD or post-combat stress. According to AWB, community-style acupuncture provides a simple, non-prescription, non-verbal healing modality in a safe environment, and in this case, among a community of veterans and their peers.

In 2006, AWB conducted a pilot clinic in Albuquerque, NM. The Albuquerque Veterans' Clinic was in continuous operation for more than a year. Its challenges and successes assisted AWB in developing recommendations and plans for other clinics. Getting a group of veterans to attend regularly was an initial difficulty, but this changed when a couple of veterans in a Veterans Affairs (VA) support group discussed their positive experiences at the clinic. Veterans in the project are reporting less insomnia and fewer nightmares, improved mental clarity, less anxiety, and a reduction in stress.

The Albuquerque Veterans' Clinic has provided treatment to hundreds of veterans in the past year. This clinic has become self-sustained and solvent. As of February 2008, other clinics already are operating in Chicago, Baltimore, Grants' Pass (Oregon), Arlington (Massachusetts), Framingham (Massachusetts) and New York. According to AWB, a clinic in Santa Fe, NM is expected to open and provide treatment to veterans.

ALTERNATIVES

HPC reports that SM 31 requests the Department Veterans' Services to conduct a study, which includes an assessment to determine whether the use of low-cost acupuncture clinics eases the burden in medical facilities; however, the study may also incorporate a financial analysis to determine the cost-savings (economic benefit) of using low-cost acupuncture clinics in lieu of conventional medical facilities as it relates to medical services required to treat PTSD. This may save the medical system money and the cost-savings incurred may be used to expand or enhance other services for veterans.

PV/mt