

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 6

2 49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2010

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A REVIEW AND
12 ANALYSIS OF STATE STATUTES FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDING
13 LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS
14 AND TO ESTABLISH A REPRESENTATIVE TASK FORCE THAT WILL DEVELOP
15 A RECOMMENDED BUDGET AND PROVIDE ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS AND
16 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES OF THE PROPOSED OFFICE.

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18 WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to experience challenges in
19 improving health outcomes and addressing health disparities;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to experience critical
22 shortages in providers in primary, oral and behavioral health
23 care, particularly in rural and inner city areas; and

24 WHEREAS, New Mexico is a predominantly rural state with a
25 high percentage of its rural population lacking access to

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1 health care services; and

2 WHEREAS, there is substantial evidence that coordination
3 of comprehensive care for individuals with chronic diseases and
4 information regarding preventive care can improve individual
5 health status and create a healthier population, reducing the
6 costs of health care; and

7 WHEREAS, community health workers, promotoras and
8 community health representatives, hereinafter collectively
9 referred to as CHWs, have demonstrated success in increasing
10 access points in underserved communities; in providing
11 culturally appropriate prevention and disease management
12 education, translation and interpretation services for medical
13 encounters; in improving health through care coordination; in
14 increasing individual health literacy and advocacy; and in
15 organizing to enable community health improvement; and

16 WHEREAS, the federal department of labor has recognized
17 and defined CHWs as "health professionals" under occupational
18 definitions; and

19 WHEREAS, federal initiatives, including health care reform
20 legislation, identify the role of CHWs as critical to the
21 provision of health education, care management, continued
22 enrollment to assure access to care for populations eligible
23 for public programs, the prevention of duplicative care, an
24 increased quality of care and the provision of home visitation
25 regarding maternal health and prenatal care; and

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1 WHEREAS, although multiple efforts are underway to train
2 CHWs for employment opportunities in rural, tribal and urban
3 areas, the financing and sustainability for those trained has
4 not been developed nor is the training standardized or
5 coordinated; and

6 WHEREAS, at least seventeen states are developing or
7 implementing certification processes and financing options for
8 CHWs; and

9 WHEREAS, the secretary of health created an office of
10 community health workers within the public health division by
11 executive appointment, an office that does not reside in public
12 health statutes and therefore has no permanent authorization;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, the office of community health workers has
15 studied, evaluated and observed the benefits of CHWs in a
16 variety of health care settings within communities, clinics,
17 hospitals and public health offices, in conjunction with the
18 CHW advisory council, created pursuant to Senate Joint Memorial
19 76 of the 2003 legislative session; and

20 WHEREAS, the advisory council has determined that the
21 department of health is the agency to coordinate training and
22 the certification of CHWs, trainers and training programs and
23 to develop and maintain a registry of certified CHWs;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested

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1 to conduct a review and analysis of state statutes for the
2 purpose of recommending legislation, by the first session of
3 the fiftieth legislature, that will establish by law an office
4 of community health workers; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health be
6 requested to establish a task force that will develop a
7 recommended budget and provide organizational details and
8 program activities of the proposed office; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be
10 representative of the community health workers and community
11 health representatives professions; higher educational
12 institutions; community colleges; vocational schools; and
13 branches of higher education, state agencies and other
14 organizations charged with the delivery, administration or
15 financing of health and social services and community provider
16 organizations, including the professional associations and
17 other potential employers; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force review best
19 practices utilizing CHWs that result in increased access and
20 efficiencies, reduced costs, improved health outcomes and
21 reduced death and disability; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this task force submit its
23 recommendations and findings to the appropriate committee
24 created by the New Mexico legislative council by October 2010;
25 and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
2 transmitted to the secretary of health.

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