

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 2

2 **50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF  
12 STATE STATUTES TO CREATE AN OFFICE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS  
13 IN STATUTE.

14  
15 WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to experience challenges in  
16 the improvement of health outcomes and addressing health  
17 disparities and socioeconomic conditions influencing health  
18 status and economic development; and

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

22 WHEREAS, New Mexico is a predominantly rural state with a  
23 high percentage of the rural population lacking access to  
24 health care services, experiencing food insecurity and gaps in  
25 transportation and lacking access to behavioral and oral health

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1 services; and

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

8 WHEREAS, community health workers, promotoras and  
9 community health representatives, hereinafter collectively  
10 referred to as community health workers, have demonstrated  
11 success in increasing access to care in underserved  
12 communities; providing culturally appropriate prevention and  
13 disease management education; providing translating and  
14 interpreting services for health care encounters; improving  
15 health through care coordination and by increasing individual  
16 health literacy and advocacy; organizing to enable community  
17 health improvement; and increasing efficiencies with  
18 accompanying improvement in health outcomes; and

19 WHEREAS, the United States department of labor has  
20 recognized and defined community health workers as health  
21 professionals under occupational definitions; and

22 WHEREAS, the federal Patient Protection and Affordable  
23 Care Act identifies and sets out roles for community health  
24 workers as critical providers of health education, care  
25 management, enrollment assistance and access to care for

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1 populations eligible for public and private programs,  
2 prevention of duplicative care, increased quality of care,  
3 increased services to individuals and families facing chronic,  
4 long-term conditions and increased services to families that  
5 would benefit from services that support maternal and child  
6 health; and

7 WHEREAS, efforts are under way to train community health  
8 workers for employment opportunities in providing health and  
9 social services in rural, tribal and urban areas; but, thus  
10 far, financing for those trained has not been developed nor is  
11 the training standardized or coordinated; and

12 WHEREAS, at least seventeen states are developing or  
13 implementing certification processes and financing options for  
14 community health workers; and

15 WHEREAS, the secretary of health created, pursuant to  
16 Senate Joint Memorial 76 from the 2003 regular legislative  
17 session, an office of community health workers within the  
18 public health division of the department of health by executive  
19 appointment, but the office does not reside in public health  
20 statutes and, therefore, has no permanent authorization; and

21 WHEREAS, the secretary of health has appointed an advisory  
22 committee that has met for the past two years; and

23 WHEREAS, the advisory committee has studied, evaluated and  
24 observed the benefits of community health workers in a variety  
25 of health care settings within communities, clinics, hospitals

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1 and public health offices in conjunction with the office of  
2 community health workers; and

3 WHEREAS, the advisory committee has determined that the  
4 department of health is the agency to coordinate training and  
5 certification of community health workers and their trainers  
6 and training programs and to develop and maintain a registry of  
7 certified community health workers;

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
9 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested  
10 to conduct a review and analysis of state statutes for the  
11 purpose of recommending to the fiftieth legislature, second  
12 session, legislation that will create in statute an office of  
13 community health workers; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of community health  
15 workers be requested to develop for implementation by July 1,  
16 2012 a statewide program for the certification of community  
17 health workers in areas of employment and service that require  
18 such certification; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the statewide program address  
20 training for community health workers that will be available  
21 within the communities to be served and, to the extent  
22 possible, to all those pursuing a career in community health  
23 and ensure that such training include community health care  
24 competencies and certification as required for the use of  
25 informatics and related technology, medical terminology and

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1 electronic medical records and systems and other skills to  
2 maximize the talents and employability of the community health  
3 workers; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the certification program  
5 accommodate the experiences, competencies and training of the  
6 existing community health workers in place as of July 1, 2012;  
7 and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that for the purposes of oversight  
9 and continuous improvement, the department of health be  
10 requested to maintain an advisory committee that shall be  
11 representative of community health workers and community health  
12 representative professions; higher educational institutions,  
13 community colleges, vocational schools and branches of higher  
14 education; state agencies and other organizations charged with  
15 the delivery, administration or financing of health and social  
16 services; community provider organizations, including the  
17 professional associations; and other potential employers; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the advisory group continually  
19 review best practices using community health workers that  
20 result in increased access and efficiencies; reduced costs; and  
21 improved health outcomes, including a lower incidence of  
22 disabilities and death; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health be  
24 requested to develop a recommended budget and provide  
25 organizational details and program activities of the proposed

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1 office; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health be  
3 requested to submit the budget recommendations and program  
4 components to the legislature for consideration in the fiftieth  
5 legislature, second session; and

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

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