AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH CARE; REQUIRING CONTRACTS FOR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES TO CONTAIN A REFUND POLICY UPON TERMINATION OF A CONTRACT DUE TO THE DEATH OF THE RESIDENT; PROVIDING FOR STORAGE OF A RESIDENT'S BELONGINGS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. A new section of the Public Health Act is enacted to read:

"ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES CONTRACTS--LIMIT ON CHARGES AFTER RESIDENT DEATH.--

A. The contract for each resident of an assisted living facility shall include a refund policy to be implemented at the time of a resident's death. The refund policy shall provide that the resident's estate or responsible party is entitled to a prorated refund based on the calculated daily rate for any unused portion of payment beyond the termination date after all charges have been paid to the licensee. For the purpose of this section, the termination date shall be the date the unit is vacated by the resident due to the resident's death and cleared of all personal belongings.

B. If a resident's belongings are not removed within one week of the resident's death and the amount of belongings does not preclude renting the unit, the facility

may clear the unit and charge the resident's estate for moving and storing the items at a rate equal to the actual cost to the facility, not to exceed ten percent of the regular rate for the unit; provided that the responsible party for the resident is given notice at least one week before the resident's belongings are removed. If the resident's belongings are not claimed within forty-five days after notification, the facility may dispose of them.

C. For the purposes of this section, "assisted living facility" means a facility required to be licensed as an assisted living facility for adults by the department of health."

SECTION 2. EMERGENCY.--It is necessary for the public peace, health and safety that this act take effect immediately.