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HOUSE MEMORIAL 44

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2020

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

URGING AWARENESS BY PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS, LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF POTENTIAL DRUGS FOR SUCCESSFULLY TREATING ALCOHOL USE DISORDER.

WHEREAS, alcohol use disorder is one of New Mexico's most pressing problems in terms of cost, morbidity and mortality; and

WHEREAS, alcohol use disorder affects every socioeconomic group, and ultimately every member of the families of those suffering from alcohol use disorder, for many reasons; and

WHEREAS, a 2019 legislative finance committee hearing brief on expanding community-based behavioral health services noted that New Mexico's alcohol-related death rate has been nearly twice the national average for two decades and has ranked first, second or third worst since 1981; and

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1 WHEREAS, the leading causes of alcohol-related chronic
2 disease mortality include chronic liver disease, alcohol
3 dependence and abuse, hypertension and stroke; and

4 WHEREAS, addiction neuroscience has changed significantly
5 in the last two decades, as have views about addiction in
6 general; and

7 WHEREAS, society and medical personnel have moved away
8 from treating addiction as a moral failing and toward a
9 treatment model that incorporates genetics, sociology and
10 physiology as causal and remedial factors; and

11 WHEREAS, there is also movement away from using the term
12 "alcoholic" toward "alcohol use disorder" to better reflect the
13 spectrum of alcohol use disorders and to move away from the
14 stigma of alcoholic as a classification; and

15 WHEREAS, although stigma persists, the moral model of
16 addiction has been supplemented by extensive research
17 suggesting that substance use disorder is better viewed as a
18 deadly but treatable chronic illness, not unlike diabetes or
19 asthma; and

20 WHEREAS, the actual effectiveness of rehabilitation and
21 programs such as alcoholics anonymous are unknown; and

22 WHEREAS, by their very design, narcotics anonymous and
23 alcoholics anonymous do not keep statistics, while
24 rehabilitation centers are not mandated to keep statistics; and

25 WHEREAS, Lance Dodes, a retired psychiatry professor from

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1 Harvard medical school, looked at alcoholics anonymous's
2 retention rates and put alcoholics anonymous's actual success
3 rate somewhere between five and eight percent; and

4 WHEREAS, while alcoholics anonymous works extremely well
5 for a certain number of participants, a larger number do not
6 benefit from the structure or intent of the program, which is
7 faith-based; and

8 WHEREAS, there are numerous opioid antagonist drugs
9 approved by the federal drug administration that are gentle,
10 relatively safe and significantly effective in the treatment of
11 alcohol use disorder; and

12 WHEREAS, these drugs can be prescribed by any practicing
13 physician without additional certifications or regulatory
14 impediments; and

15 WHEREAS, in addition, these drugs are available in generic
16 versions, are widely available for minimal cost and boast a
17 high success rate for what can be termed a "cure", or long-term
18 remission; and

19 WHEREAS, there are also specific treatments, widely known
20 as the Sinclair method, named after American neuroscientist
21 David Sinclair, that involve a reversal of the damage that
22 occurs to normal brain pathways that mediate pleasure and self-
23 control; and

24 WHEREAS, Finnish clinics using the Sinclair method have
25 found that it is effective in seventy-eight percent of

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1 patients, while clinics using the method in Florida report
2 eighty-five percent efficacy, according to Roy Eskapa, Ph.D.,
3 the author of *The Cure for Alcoholism: The Medically Proven*
4 *Way to Eliminate Alcohol Addiction*; and

5 WHEREAS, alternative treatments that aim to help patients
6 learn to drink in moderation have been verified and vetted by
7 the larger scientific and medical community; and

8 WHEREAS, very few physicians are aware that there are
9 multiple safe and gentle medications available for the
10 treatment of alcohol use disorder; and

11 WHEREAS, wider knowledge of alternative treatments for
12 alcohol use disorder could provide a different pathway for
13 those who suffer from this devastating disease;

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
15 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that primary care
16 physicians, licensed clinical social workers and other health
17 care providers be urged to become aware of potential drugs for
18 successfully treating alcohol use disorder; and

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