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HOUSE MEMORIAL 22

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024

INTRODUCED BY

Mark Duncan and Jason C. Harper and Alan T. Martinez
and Joshua N. Hernandez and Anthony Allison

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A WORKING
GROUP TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF
MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, research indicates that there are connections
between a student's mental health and the behavioral problems
that affect a school's learning environment and safety; and

WHEREAS, since the end of the coronavirus disease 2019
pandemic restrictions, schools have reported increases in
behavioral outbursts and aggression, fights and other acts of
violence on school campuses; and

WHEREAS, behavioral and mental health needs are a
significant concern for New Mexico students; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 New Mexico youth risk and resiliency
survey reported that New Mexico high school students engage in

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1 risky behaviors at higher rates when compared to the national
2 average in ten of fourteen indicators, and risky behaviors are
3 linked to poor mental health and academic outcomes that have
4 lifelong consequences; and

5 WHEREAS, students' unmet mental health needs pose barriers
6 to learning and development; and

7 WHEREAS, because of their training and position, school
8 counselors are uniquely qualified to provide instruction,
9 appraisal and advisement, short-term counseling and referral
10 services to students and their families; and

11 WHEREAS, of school-age children who receive behavioral or
12 mental health services, seventy to eighty percent receive those
13 services at school; and

14 WHEREAS, preventive school-based mental health and
15 behavioral services are essential, and without planned
16 intervention for students exhibiting early warning signs,
17 setbacks in academic, career, social and emotional development
18 can result in later school years and adulthood; and

19 WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and
20 prevention advises that early identification of mental health
21 disorders in children is vital to help children get the support
22 they need and to prevent negative effects on their health and
23 relationships throughout life; and

24 WHEREAS, various models of school-based health care exist,
25 including on-site services by a mental health provider or at

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1 school-based health centers; and

2 WHEREAS, according to the department of health's 2022
3 *State of Mental Health in New Mexico* report, more than forty
4 percent of high school students reported persistent feelings of
5 sadness or hopelessness in 2019, which was higher than the
6 national average; and

7 WHEREAS, the rate of New Mexico high school students
8 suffering from major depressive disorder nearly doubled between
9 2015 and 2020; and

10 WHEREAS, one-half of all lifetime-diagnosable mental
11 health conditions begin by age fourteen, and schools can play a
12 major support role during these critical years, especially when
13 family-initiated private mental health treatment is not an
14 option; and

15 WHEREAS, when school districts team up with mental health
16 professionals experienced in the recognition and treatment of
17 students' mental health, opportunities are created for
18 conversations that can lead to necessary treatment;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
20 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public
21 education department be requested to create a working group for
22 the purpose of studying and identifying barriers to mental
23 health care and gaps in existing mental health care for public
24 secondary school students, including funding, costs and
25 licensure; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be requested
2 to make recommendations to the legislative education study
3 committee and the legislative finance committee with the goal
4 of providing mental health care services at all public
5 secondary school campuses; and

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

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