

LFC Requester:	LFC
-----------------------	-----

**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS
2026 REGULAR SESSION**

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, EMAIL ANALYSIS TO:

LFC@NMLEGIS.GOV

and

DFA@STATE.NM.US

{Include the bill no. in the email subject line, e.g., HB2, and only attach one bill analysis and related documentation per email message}

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Click all that apply:

Original **Amendment**
Correction **Substitute**

Date Prepared: 2026-01-23
Bill No: HM4

Sponsor: Roybal Caballero, Patricia
STUDY HIGHER ED
Short Title: HEALTH INSURANCE COSTS

Agency Name and Code: NMHED
Number: _____
Person Writing: Gallegos, Brittany
brittany.
Phone: 5056706478 **Email:** gallegos@hed.nm.gov

SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue	Recurring	Fund Affected

FY26	FY27	FY28	or Nonrecurring	
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

House Memorial 4 (HM4) requests that the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) conduct a comprehensive study on options to expand access to affordable health insurance for all New Mexico public college and university graduate student employees. This study will be conducted in collaboration with the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED), the New Mexico Department of Finance Administration (NMDFA), the New Mexico Health Care Authority (NMHCA), and public colleges and universities. The study will evaluate coverage availability and affordability across appointment types. It will also identify gaps and provide recommendations on eligibility standards, fiscal impacts, funding approaches, and expected impacts on workforce stability and student outcomes. A report will be due no later than October 1, 2026.

Graduate student employees are defined as graduate students hired by a New Mexico public college or university to provide instruction, provide support to faculty instructors, and/or complete research or degree-related academic work.

NMHED's analysis of this bill focuses on the higher education implications of the proposed legislation. Additional insight may be obtained from other agencies' analyses.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HM4 does not contain any appropriations and would impose an unfunded mandate on the agencies and institutions involved. Conducting the study will require staff time and administrative resources from NMHED, NMDFA, NMHCA, and public colleges and universities not funded through the memorial.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HM4 requires the study to evaluate health insurance availability and affordability across institutions for faculty, temporary part-time faculty, and graduate student employees. The University of New Mexico (UNM) is the only public college or university in New Mexico providing employer-funded medical insurance for graduate student employees.

The report will include findings and recommendations on:

- Coverage options and eligibility standards for employer-supported medical coverage and, where feasible, dental and vision coverage
- Estimated fiscal impacts under multiple coverage scenarios, including premium contributions, cost sharing, administrative costs, and phased implementation options
- Potential funding approaches, including state, federal, or private sources
- Expected impacts on worker quality of life and financial stability, including access to preventive care, continuity of care, and mental health services
- Recommended statewide data collection and reporting standards to ensure comparable tracking of health coverage and costs over time

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

To support the study required by HM4, NMHED would coordinate closely with partner agencies to align the scope of work and ensure requests are directed to appropriate institutional contacts. Implementation will require staff time and administrative capacity from NMHED, as well as participation and resource commitments from other agencies and public colleges and universities to collect, validate, and submit the required data.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Section 21-1-26.7 NMSA 1978 requires NMHED to submit an annual accountability report to the Governor and Legislature. The statute requires the report to include detailed information on faculty compensation and benefits practices, including distribution of part-time and full-time faculty, per-credit-hour pay rates, salary increases by appointment type, and institutional policies related to benefits. HM4 will not duplicate this work, but rather, expand it.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

N/A

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMHED's existing data collection and reporting processes provide useful baseline information on current faculty benefits practices, including whether health, dental, and vision coverage is available by appointment type. However, HM4 will expand beyond the current scope of NMHED reporting by requiring a broader evaluation of health insurance affordability and availability, and analysis of potential benefit plan options and future coverage scenarios. Given NMHED's established survey infrastructure and institutional contacts, NMHED can serve as a key partner to LFC in supporting the study. This work will also require additional staff time and administrative resources not funded through the memorial.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

If HM4 is not enacted, there will be no study on the availability and affordability of health insurance across a range of higher education appointment types.

AMENDMENTS

N/A