

LFC Requester:

Connor Jorgensen

AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 REGULAR SESSION

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO

AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov and email to billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov*(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)***SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION***{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

Date Prepared: January 30, 2026 *Check all that apply:*
Bill Number: SB 179 Original Correction
 Amendment Substitute

Sponsor: Sens. Lopez & Sedillo Lopez **Agency Name and Code** University of New Mexico-952
Short Title: UNM MEDICAL SPANISH EDUCATION PROGRAM **Number:** _____
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
	\$350.00	non	SGF

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

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

(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

Synopsis:

SB 179 appropriates \$350,000 from the general fund to the University of New Mexico Board of Regents for expenditure in FY27–FY28 to support the UNM Health Sciences Center Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in developing and implementing Spanish-language health sciences curriculum to enhance the medical Spanish education program for Health Sciences Center students; any unexpended balance reverts to the General Fund at the end of FY28.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The UNM HSC, a Hispanic-Serving Institution and the largest publicly funded institution awarding health professions degrees in New Mexico, is uniquely positioned to develop New Mexico’s next generation of bilingual English /Spanish healthcare workers.

The UNM School of Medicine has offered the Clinical Communication Skills in Spanish (CCSiS) program since 2022 as an opt-in program during the fourth year of medical education. CCSiS directly increases the number of certified health professionals who can provide direct, efficient, empathetic, and linguistically competent care for Spanish-speaking patients across New Mexico.

In 2024, the UNM Health Sciences Center Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion received GRO funding to expand Spanish language instruction across the health sciences campus to enhance Spanish language proficiency among students to improve culturally and linguistically responsive care. Funds were successfully deployed to assess and pilot Canopy Learn, an online medical Spanish curriculum that helps building Spanish skills for healthcare workers.

Populations with a preferred language other than English are at risk of experiencing disparities in accessing healthcare, decreased quality of care and poorer health outcomes than English speakers. Patient-Provider language concordance has been shown to improve health outcomes and decrease health disparities.¹

The 2023 UNM Hospital Community Needs Assessment identified language as a “key social determinant of health because it is the primary way people communicate their health needs and received health information. The inability to communicate effectively in English can be barrier to getting care and contributes to health disparities among ethnic and racial minorities in New Mexico. People with limited English may have trouble scheduling appointments, getting health insurance and navigating the increasingly complex system. Furthermore, when patients and providers don’t speak the same language, it is harder to create trusting relationships and share critical health information. Twenty six percent of Bernalillo County residents and 31 percent of New Mexicans speak a language other than English at home. Over 80% of these individuals speak Spanish.”²

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32507590/>

² https://unmhealth.org/about/_files/unmh-chna-2023-web-final.pdf page30

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

TECHNICAL ISSUES

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

ALTERNATIVES

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

AMENDMENTS