## AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH; PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF A DENTAL HEALTH CAREER LADDER PROGRAM THROUGH NEW MEXICO'S STATE-SUPPORTED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

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

Section 1. DENTAL HEALTH CAREER LADDER PROGRAM-COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION.--

- A. The commission on higher education shall develop and implement by July 1, 2000 a statewide dental health career ladder program to include all appropriate state-supported post-secondary educational institutions.
- B. The dental health career ladder program shall include the following programs:
  - (1) dental office auxiliary training;
  - (2) dental assistant certification;
  - (3) dental hygienist associate degree;
  - (4) dental hygienist bachelor's degree; and
  - (5) dental hygienist master's degree.
  - C. The dental health career ladder program shall:
- (1) be structured to produce trained individuals for service in geographical areas underserved in New Mexico;
- (2) use existing educational programs and distribute needed training programs throughout the state;
- (3) accommodate welfare-to-work clients and nontraditional students;
- (4) ensure consistency in accumulation and transfer of credit hours from institution to institution and from one degree program to another;

- (5) seek accreditation for each program so
  as to facilitate professional licensing;
- (6) recognize and incorporate relevant work
  experience in awarding educational credit;
- (7) use alternative methods of course delivery, including distance education and partnerships with the private sector;
- (8) use expertise from both educators and dental professionals in designing and implementing programs; and
- (9) assist the New Mexico board of dental health care to develop and provide continuing education programs.
- Section 2. LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS REPORT.--The commission on higher education shall report its progress in developing and implementing Section 1 of this act, including projected fiscal needs of the dental health career ladder program, to the interim legislative health and human services committee before September 1, 1999.