HOUSE BILL

58TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2027

INTRODUCED BY

DISCUSSION DRAFT

AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH; CREATING THE DEMENTIA CARE SPECIALIST PROGRAM; PRESCRIBING DUTIES TO THE AGING AND LONG-TERM SERVICES DEPARTMENT; REQUIRING REPORTING; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

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

SECTION 1. [NEW MATERIAL] DEMENTIA CARE SPECIALIST PROGRAM CREATED.--

A. As used in this section:

(1) "dementia" means a disorder that results in cognitive decline, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia and other neurocognitive disorders as recognized by nationally accepted clinical standards;

(2) "dementia care specialist" means a person employed or contracted by the department or a department-

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designated provider that is trained to provide dementia-specific care coordination, early detection support, systems navigation, caregiver education, community outreach or workforce training;

(3) "department" means the aging and long-term services department; and

(4) "program" means the dementia care specialist program.

B. The "dementia care specialist program" is created as a program administered by the department to provide support for persons or families of persons experiencing dementia.

C. The department shall:

(1) oversee implementation of the program;

(2) employ or contract for dementia care specialists to serve throughout the state;

(3) require dementia care specialists to provide:

(a) cognitive assessments and care planning for persons living with dementia and their caregivers;

(b) assistance with early detection, including community cognitive assessments and referrals to diagnostic services;

(c) education, including caregiver education, skills training and support to reduce stress and

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prevent crises;

(d) training to expand dementia competency among health care providers, first responders, long-term care workers and community-based organizations; and

(e) assistance in development of dementia-capable policies and practices within communities, clinics and institutions;

(4) collaborate with the health care authority, the department of health, the Indian affairs department, area agencies on aging, health care systems, federally recognized Indian nations, tribes and pueblos within New Mexico and community-based organizations to support the program;

(5) provide culturally appropriate outreach and services, including materials in languages commonly spoken in New Mexico; and

(6) collect data necessary to measure program performance, including impacts on caregiver stress, early detection, care transitions, hospitalization, emergency department utilization and institutional placement.

D. The department shall submit an interim report by October 1, 2028 and a report by July 1, 2029 on the program to the governor, the legislative health and human services committee and the legislative finance committee. The report shall include:

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(1) the number and geographic distribution of dementia care specialists;

(2) populations served and services delivered;

(3) workforce training activities completed;

(4) outcomes related to early detection, care transitions, caregiver support and health care utilization; provided that such information is compliant with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and the federal regulations promulgated pursuant to that act;

(5) program cost savings to the state when data is available; and

(6) recommendations for program continuation or expansion.

SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.—Three million five hundred thousand dollars ($3,500,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the aging and long-term services department for expenditure in fiscal years 2028 through 2030 to conduct the dementia care specialist program. Any unexpended balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2030 shall revert to the general fund.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the provisions of this act is July 1, 2027.

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