

SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR



RETTA WARD, CABINET SECRETARY

October 8, 2014

Representative Patricia A. Lundstrom  
3406 Bluehill Avenue  
Gallup, NM 87301

Dear Representative Lundstrom:

The Department of Health (DOH) partnered with the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center (UNM HSC) to pursue the intent of House Memorial 48 (HM48) Liver Transplantation Institute feasibility study, which you sponsored during the 2013 Legislative Session. UNM HSC offered to fund the study and conduct a request for proposal (RFP) process in order to select the subject matter expert most suited to complete the study. Five qualifying entities were contacted and informed of the RFP. A panel consisting of personnel from DOH and UNM HSC reviewed the submitted proposals and awarded the contract for the feasibility study to Transplant Management Group (TMG) in October 2013.

TMG has been providing expert consultation and educational services to transplant centers and organizations since 1997. We believe that they are well qualified to provide an informed and experienced review of feasibility related to a liver transplant center for the state. I have confidence in TMG's findings and recommendations due to the rigor with which they conducted the study. I consider their report to have valid findings, which were thoroughly considered by the Department and UNM HSC.

We would like to request that you, UNM HSC and Presbyterian Hospital, as well as any other stakeholders you wish to include, join Dr. Stephen Dorman, DOH Chief Medical Officer, in a meeting to explore the steps necessary to develop an action plan based on the scenario with the highest recommendation. The recommendation includes the development of a national partnership / collaborative relationship with an out of state liver transplant program. (Attached: segment of HM48 report) As indicated in the report, this scenario would be modeled on the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) system. As the report indicates, individuals who would qualify for participation in this system would most likely be limited to Medicaid patients because private insurers manage their own patients.

I am very grateful for the commitment you have to your constituents who are dealing with such a challenging health condition. It is clear that you are working to provide a better system for them to receive the care they need. We are hopeful that this study will result in greater care coordination for those patients requiring a liver transplant solution. We will be in touch soon with an invitation from Dr. Dorman to join a meeting to discuss next steps. Please feel free to contact Tres Hunter Schnell, DOH Policy Director (505.827.0572) should you have any questions about my recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Retta Ward".

Retta Ward  
Cabinet Secretary

Xc: Stephen Dorman, MD, Chief Medical Officer, DOH  
Steve McKernan, CEO, University of New Mexico, Health Sciences Center  
Michael Hely, Attorney, NM Legislative Council Service

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