

**2005 APPROVED
WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE
for the
LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

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Work Plan

Section 2-13-1 NMSA 1978 creating the interim legislative health and human services committee states that its annual responsibility is to "conduct a continuing study of the programs, agencies, policies, issues and needs relating to health and human services".

In keeping with this responsibility, the committee will direct the continuation of the health care financing study started by the passage of House Bill 955 in 2003. The committee believes it is critical for the legislature to have an annual or biennial fiscal report on the status of health care expenditures in New Mexico as a guide in making both policy and appropriations decisions. The initial study, published in January 2005, offers structure to enhance legislative capacity in the area of health care expenditures. The anticipated refinements and additions of this year's work will enhance that capacity to assist the legislature in making critical policy choices in this area.

Medicaid will again be the subject of at least one major hearing to learn what measures are being taken by the human services department to hold or lower costs and which programs are most likely to be cut if benefits or reimbursements must be reduced.

The committee will review several laws enacted this year to reduce the state's uninsured

population, with a view toward using the tools of the health care financing comprehensive study as much as possible. Also, this is the first operating year of the state coverage initiative program (SCI), which is intended to help small employers and their employees obtain health coverage and which the committee will also monitor.

The new behavioral health collaborative created in 2004 is in its first year of operation and has contracted with a single entity (ValueOptions) to manage all public behavioral health care statewide, regardless of funding sources or previous departmental authority. The effects of this major change in delivery will be carefully examined by the committee.

Long-term care services, affecting primarily the fastest-growing segment of New Mexico's population, the elderly, is the next issue with major fiscal impact on the state's spending capacity. New Mexico's population is aging more rapidly than the country's population as a whole, and the legislature re-categorized those brain-injured and other chronically ill patients as a responsibility of the new aging and long-term services department. The committee will learn about various segments of this shift in responsibility throughout the interim, starting with a full-day hearing in July.

Prescription drugs, still a leading expense in health care, will be the subject of a full October hearing, with emphasis on the issues of pharmacy benefit manager programs and the differing co-payments required for mail-order 90-day prescriptions as opposed to the maximum 30-day prescriptions at retail pharmacies.

Disparities in health care among ethnic, gender and age minorities will be the subject of the September hearing, along with increased attention to telemedicine and telehealth issues. These latter efforts will also be discussed during the committee's annual hearings on UNM's health sciences center efforts.

The 14 joint memorial-directed executive agency studies, plus one directed to the legislative health and human services committee itself, will be heard in October. In addition, October is the normal time for the several dozen advocate organizations to present appropriations requests, which are then passed on to the legislative finance committee.

The legislative council directed the committee to address the issues of teen pregnancy and unused appropriations aimed to reduce the medicaid waiver waiting lists.

APPROVED MEETING SCHEDULE

The committee adopted the legislative council's recommended meeting dates and

proposes to meet:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 9	Santa Fe
July 27-29	Santa Fe and Shiprock
August 24-26	Albuquerque
September 19-21	Las Cruces
October 19-21	Santa Fe
November 28-30	Santa Fe