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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: King DATE TYPED: 3/13/03 HB HM 45

SHORT TITLE: Study Impact of Helmet Requirements SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST: Dunbar

### APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	NFI				

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: SB 637, HB 664

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From  
Department of Health (DOH)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 45 request the DOH to study the impact of requiring minors to wear helmets when engaging in snow sports or riding motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles or bicycles. DOH should report its recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committee by October 2003.

#### Significant Issues

The memorial points out that:

- Use of helmets decrease the severity of injury, the likelihood of death and the overall cost of medical care;
- Helmets prevent traumatic brain injuries;
- Head injuries account for 20% of total estimated injuries among children under the age of 15;

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- Winter sports helmets reduce the risk of head and brain injuries by 53% in children 15yrs of age or younger;
- Bicycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 85% and the risk of brain injury by 88%.

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are among the most likely types of injury to cause death or permanent disability. In the U.S. in 1995, direct and indirect costs of TBI totaled an estimated \$56.3 billion (Thurman 2000). People ages 15 to 24 years and those over age 75 are the two age groups at highest risk for TBI (Thurman 1999). Crashes involving motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and recreational vehicles are the primary causes of Traumatic Brain Injury (Thurman 2001). Brain injuries are the leading cause of death and disability among children, teenagers and young adults (NM Brain Injury Advisory Council). HM 45 has limited its study to TBI injury related to snow sports, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and bicycles. Helmet use is an effective strategy to prevent severity of TBI in other areas as well. Given the steady increase in the popularity of scooters, skateboards, horseback riding and in-line skates, injury and death rates for minors continue to be significant. The steady increase in automobile congestion on public roadways, and the dramatic increase in the number of public skateboard parks are contributing risk factors. All-terrain vehicle use in New Mexico, particularly in rural parts of the state, has resulted in serious injury and death among children and youth.

DOH notes that although the proposed HM 45 is meritorious in that it attempts to study impact of helmet use among minors on the cost and severity of TBI injury, this information is well represented in research and studies nation wide. The case for helmet use to prevent injury severity and reduce costs is already well demonstrated.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

DOH staff time would be required to conduct the study required by HM 45.

### **RELATIONSHIP**

HM 45 relates to SB 637 and HB 664 the Child Helmet Safety Act, both of which would require a person 17 years of age or younger, who is a user, operator or passenger of a bicycle, in-line or roller skates, non-motorized scooter or skateboard on a public roadway, public bicycle paths, public skateboard parks or other public rights of way to wear a protective helmet at all times that is fastened securely upon his head with the straps of the helmet.

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1.5 million Americans sustain a Traumatic Brain Injury each year. TBI is the leading cause of death among persons under the age of 35 years. The CDC also concludes the risk for TBI is highest among adolescents, young adults and those older than 75 years of age. It is estimated that the cost of TBI in the US is \$48.3 billion annually.

As an overall attempt to reduce head injuries the Consumer Product Safety Commission did an evaluation of head injuries associated with snow skiing and snowboarding. The study found 44% of head injuries could be addressed by the use of helmets. For children under 15 years of age 53% of head injuries could be addressed by wearing a helmet. The Department of Industrial

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Manufacturing Engineering at Rochester Institute of Technology has estimated that helmets could prevent 60 – 80% of skiing head injuries. The American Medical Association concluded that the use of ski helmets would have a great effect in preventing mild concussions in slow speed collisions and reduces the severity of potentially more serious head injuries in high-speed collisions.

Wearing a certified helmet specifically designed for skiing and snowboarding can make a difference in preventing and reducing head injuries from falls and collisions. Encouraging youth to participate in prevention practices would follow to adulthood. Targeting risk behaviors such as non-helmet use will ameliorate youth outcomes threatened by morbidity and mortality due to Traumatic Brain Injuries. In addition to wearing helmets specifically designed for skiing or snowboarding, education of proper helmet use and implications of helmet use and other safe skiing prevention should also be implemented.

Among children ages 0 to 14 years in the US, traumatic brain injury results in an estimated 3,000 deaths; 29,000 hospitalizations; 400,000 emergency department visits (Langlois 2001). Twenty nine percent (29%) of serious scooter injuries in 2000 were head injuries (Consumer Product Safety Commission); 25% of those head injuries resulted from a collision with an automobile (Consumer Product Safety Commission). Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 85% and brain injury by 88% (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and CDC). An estimated 76,000 minors were injured seriously enough while in-line skating in 1996 to require emergency medical care (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1998). It was estimated that if all bicyclists in the United States had worn helmets between 1984 and 1988, approximately 2500 deaths and 750,000 head injuries would have been prevented (CDC, 1993).

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