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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Altamirano DATE TYPED 02/14/05 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Dental Distance Learning Program SB 397

ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$45.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to the appropriation for the Commission of Higher Education in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to HB107, HB503, HB504, SB131, SB342, and SB354

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)

Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

New Mexico Health Policy Commission (HPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 397 – Making an Appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education for a State-wide Interactive Dental Distance Education Program – appropriates \$45,000 from the general fund to the Commission on Higher Education for expenditure in FY06 to work with a community organization to develop and implement a statewide interactive dental distance education program. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

Significant Issues

DOH notes that New Mexico is currently experiencing a shortage of oral health professionals. The Governor's Oral Health Council recently submitted recommendations regarding workforce development to the governor's office. One of the major recommendations was to "Increase funding for the distance learning education program..." In addition, members of New Mexico's congressional delegation obtained \$250,000 through the 2004 federal appropriation act to develop and implement an Interactive Distance Education Program for dental hygienists and dental assistants.

DOH also suggests that the proposed appropriation would begin to address the shortage of dental hygienists and dental assistants in New Mexico, and improve coordination between existing oral health programs statewide. Increasing the number of trained, certified and licensed oral health professionals will help reduce oral health disparities, particularly for children.

While in its analysis of this bill, CHE observes, "The Commission on Higher Education has not adopted a formal position on this issue;" it later recognizes that dental hygiene and other dental service courses are provided online by a number of institutions in other states. Moreover that the programs provide knowledge and skill development in assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating dental hygiene care to meet the oral wellness needs of clients in a variety of clinical and community settings.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

DOH indicates that this bill is consistent with the DOH strategic plan Program Area 9, Strategic Direction: Achieve excellence and accountability in administration and services; Objective 3: Increase the health workforce supply, in collaboration with other entities in New Mexico.

However, HPC suggests that the bill does not specify whether the interactive distance education program is a web based application or a satellite application, and that the difference could be significant in cost with the satellite version being the older and more expensive. The satellite version also has limitations for the student needing to be in a specific location at a specific time. The Web based application requires the student to have a computer with internet access and allow for the student to access the course content at any time.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The \$45,000 appropriation proposed in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CHE would retain administrative oversight of this initiative.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to the appropriation for the Commission on Higher Education in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to HB503: making an appropriation (\$150,000) to the Roswell Branch of Eastern New Mexico University for the establishment of a dental hygienist education program.

Relates to HB504: making an appropriation (\$200,000) to Dona Ana Branch Community College for the establishment of a dental hygienist education program.

Relates to SB354: making an appropriation (\$200,000) to New Mexico State University for the Dona Ana Branch Community College to develop and implement a two-year dental hygiene program.

Relates to SB 342: making an appropriation (\$150,000) to the Roswell Branch Campus of Eastern New Mexico University for the development and implementation of a four-year dental hygiene program.

Relates to HB107 and SB131: HB107 (Interactive Dental Distance Education Program) and SB131 (Dental Hygienist Distance Learning Program) both seek to appropriate \$45,000 from the general fund to the Department of Health to contract with a statewide association of community colleges to develop and implement an interactive distance education program to teach dental hygiene and dental assisting statewide.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

DOH suggests that the year 2000 Oral Health Survey conducted by the DOH found that 65 percent of the 2,000 children surveyed had experienced tooth decay; and 37 percent of the sample had untreated tooth decay. Approximately 25 percent of New Mexico adults, age 65 years and older, have lost all their natural teeth. The national target recommended by *Healthy People 2010* is to have no more than 20 percent of adults of this age group with loss of all natural teeth. DOH further indicates that:

- The federal government has designated all or part of 26 New Mexico counties as dental Health Professional Shortage Areas. Dental services are inadequate due to a shortage of needed health professionals – especially in rural and remote areas of the state.
- New Mexico has several programs designed to address the need for oral health professionals. Dental hygiene programs are in two locations – University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, and the San Juan Community College in Farmington. Public dental assistant programs are in several locations – Santa Fe Community College, Eastern New Mexico University Branch College in Roswell, University of New Mexico Branch in Gallup, and Dona Ana Branch Community College in Dona Ana. There are also two small private dental assisting programs in Albuquerque. New Mexico has no dental school.

HPC offers the following more general observations as to the state of dental hygiene in New Mexico:

- The number of dental hygienists per 100,000 population in New Mexico is below the national average. National Ratio 52:1, New Mexico 39:1-2003. (New Mexico Oral Health Surveillance System)
- Oral Health Professional shortage areas (Dental HPSAs): New Mexico counties designated 30 of 33. International border designated 6 New Mexico counties.
- The growth rate in the number of professional hygiene licenses issued in New Mexico does not keep pace with the growth in total population.
- The supply rate for the number of professional hygiene licenses issued in New Mexico will face a severe impact during the next five years when the retirement rate will exceed supply rate.
- Historically New Mexico has had one dental hygiene education program that has not grown since 1963 (UNM). Twenty-four students graduate per year.
- In 2001, a second dental hygiene program began at San Juan Community College in Farmington with the capacity of graduating 12 students per year. Two hundred applicants applied for the 2001-2002 academic year.
- Additional dental education programs are needed to improve dental care access in New Mexico.
- New Mexico Statute requires that a licensed dental hygienist practice under the indirect supervision of a licensed dentist, therefore the increase in licensed dental hygienists needs to grow proportionally with that of dentists. Without a dental school in New Mexico the shortage of dentists will prevail.
- Dentist, dental hygienist and dental personnel recruitment issues must be examined to meet the access needs of New Mexico.

BFW/yr