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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/25/06

SPONSOR Feldman LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Increase Dental Education Slots SB 180

ANALYST Earp

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$136.5	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: Senate Bills 83 and 85, House Bill 172

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From  
 Higher Education Department (HED)  
 Department of Health (DH)  
 Health Policy Commission (HPC)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 180, sponsored by Senator Feldman on behalf of the interim Health and Human Services Committee, appropriates \$136,500 from the general fund to the Higher Education Department (HED) to increase the number of slots for dental students seeking support from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$136,500 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

New Mexico does not have a dental school within its borders; however, the state has provided some access to dental education for many years through the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) professional student exchange program. New Mexico currently has 11 slots dedicated to dentistry with WICHE institutions. This program provides students with a set scholarship amount of \$22,000 per year to use at an out-of-state dental program. If enacted, SB180 would increase the number of slots for dental students by six, which will increase the potential for more dental health professionals to provide services in New Mexico.

The WICHE program offers participating students reduced tuition levels at participating institutions. New Mexico students are required to return to New Mexico to practice after graduation. According to information provided by HED, New Mexico spent \$255,200 on the WICHE dental exchange to support 19 student participants during 1993-1994. By 2005-2006, the amount of funding had increased to \$604,500 and the number of participating students increased to 31.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

HED manages New Mexico's participation in the WICHE program. No significant additional administrative impact would result from enactment of this legislation.

### **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

This bill relates to Senate Bills 83 and 85 and House Bill 172. All of these bills promote the expansion of dental services in New Mexico.

This bill relates to a recurring appropriation in the General Appropriation Act to HED for the WICHE Student Exchange Program. The WICHE program is a component of the overall funding appropriated by the state for student financial aid.

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

The Health Policy Commission notes that New Mexico currently does not have a dental school so the only avenue for individuals who wish to become dentists is to complete their undergraduate education in New Mexico and obtain acceptance in dental schools in adjoining states. Through WICHE, slots will be available for NM students in dental schools in the WICHE region. The average dental education program is four years. With the current slots filled with students who may be in a one, two, three or four year program, it is conceivable that only 8 individuals from NM will graduate from dental school yearly. This still does not begin to address the critical shortage in NM.

New Mexico has traditionally been severely underserved in oral health. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) reports:

- There were 616 dentists, 560 dental hygienists, and 1,520 dental assistants practicing in New Mexico in 2000. There were 33.8 dentists per 100,000 populations in NM in 2000, well below the national rate of 63.6. New Mexico ranked 49th in the nation in dentists per capita. The per capita ratio of dental hygienists was also below the national rate.
- The number of dentists in NM increased 2% between 1991 and 2000 while the state's population grew 18%. The result was a 13% decline in dentists per capita, in contrast to a 16% increase nationwide.