

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 31

2 **48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2008**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Mary Kay Papen

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF A BIPARTISAN LEGISLATIVE BEHAVIORAL
12 HEALTH CAUCUS THAT WOULD PROVIDE A VENUE FOR LEGISLATORS TO
13 LEARN ABOUT IMPORTANT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AFFECTING NEW
14 MEXICANS.

15
16 WHEREAS, good mental health is essential to everyone's
17 overall health and well-being; and

18 WHEREAS, mental health problems can affect all areas of a
19 person's life; and

20 WHEREAS, the United States department of health and human
21 services reports that mental health problems strike one in four
22 Americans each year regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity,
23 religion or economic status; and

24 WHEREAS, all Americans are vulnerable to chronic mental
25 health problems associated with trauma and can benefit greatly

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1 from early identification and treatment; and

2 WHEREAS, the United States surgeon general reports that
3 one-third of adults and one-half of young people with mental
4 health problems go without the help they need; and

5 WHEREAS, the national institute of mental health reports
6 that mental disorders are implicated in ninety percent of the
7 thirty thousand suicides and the six hundred fifty thousand
8 suicide attempts in the country each year; and

9 WHEREAS, the surgeon general also estimates that untreated
10 and mistreated mental illness costs American business,
11 government and taxpayers approximately eighty-three billion
12 dollars (\$83,000,000,000) annually; and

13 WHEREAS, the national association of state mental health
14 program directors research institute ranks New Mexico fifty-
15 first in the nation in per capita mental health spending; and

16 WHEREAS, people with mental illness who are in recovery
17 can lead full, productive lives in the community; and

18 WHEREAS, a legislative behavioral health caucus would
19 create a venue for legislators to learn about important mental
20 health issues affecting the residents of New Mexico; and

21 WHEREAS, a behavioral health caucus would provide
22 legislators an opportunity to examine the role mental health
23 plays in every community and in every sector of government,
24 including medicaid, criminal justice, education and child
25 welfare; and

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1 WHEREAS, members of the behavioral health caucus would
2 send a strong message about the priority of mental health and
3 wellness and of finding solutions that bridge unmet needs,
4 improve the quality and outcomes of care and improve our
5 communities; and

6 WHEREAS, a behavioral health caucus would help ensure that
7 mental health services, including community supports, are
8 funded at appropriate levels; and

9 WHEREAS, a behavioral health caucus would contribute to
10 the knowledge of legislative committees and address issues that
11 could affect access to mental health services;

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
13 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it support the creation of a New
14 Mexico behavioral health caucus and that members of both houses
15 and all political parties be encouraged to join, or become
16 familiar with the work of, the legislative behavioral health
17 caucus; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the behavioral health caucus
19 be encouraged to work with groups such as the national alliance
20 on mental illness, the mental health association and other
21 behavioral health advocacy groups to educate the legislature
22 and the public on topics of interest regarding behavioral
23 health; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
25 transmitted to the national alliance on mental illness-New

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