

1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE CHILDREN, YOUTH
3 AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE
4 NEED FOR SOCIAL WORKERS, THE COST OF GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK
5 EDUCATION AND THE NEED FOR STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR SOCIAL
6 WORKERS.

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8 WHEREAS, loan forgiveness programs encourage future
9 professionals to pursue certain fields of study by offsetting
10 incurred loan debt with payments for certain work-related
11 requirements that must be fulfilled by the student borrower;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, according to the board of social work examiners,
14 New Mexico had only three thousand five hundred social workers
15 licensed at the master's level in 2008; and

16 WHEREAS, according to the workforce solutions department,
17 a beginning master's level social worker earns an average of
18 twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) per year, but graduates
19 with an average debt of twenty-six thousand seven hundred
20 dollars (\$26,700); and

21 WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2008, an estimated eighty
22 thousand two hundred fifty-four consumers were served with
23 mental health services, according to the annual report of the
24 interagency behavioral health purchasing collaborative; and

25 WHEREAS, as a group, social workers are traditionally the SJM 55
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1 largest provider of mental health services; and

2 WHEREAS, the New Mexico health policy commission manages
3 a geographic access data system that collects and reports
4 information on the distribution of selected health
5 professionals in rural and underserved areas to inform policy
6 decisions regarding the need for health professionals in
7 those areas; and

8 WHEREAS, data regarding the availability or need for
9 social workers is not included in that geographic access data
10 system;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
12 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the
13 children, youth and families department be requested to
14 conduct a study to determine the need for social workers, the
15 cost of graduate social work education and the need for
16 student loan forgiveness for social workers; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify current
18 shortages of social workers, particularly in rural areas; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health and
20 the children, youth and families department collaborate with
21 the New Mexico health policy commission to identify the steps
22 necessary to include social workers in the geographic access
23 data system; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study develop criteria
25 for awarding student loan forgiveness to social work

1 students; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health and
3 the children, youth and families department consult with the
4 New Mexico chapter of the national association of social
5 workers and an association representing social work students
6 in conducting the study; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and
8 recommendations of this study be presented to the interim
9 legislative health and human services committee by
10 October 1, 2009; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
12 transmitted to the secretary of health and the secretary of
13 children, youth and families. _____

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