

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 85

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

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FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO FORM A TASK FORCE TO
STUDY THE GROWING NEED FOR PRIMARY CARE PRACTITIONERS IN RURAL
AND MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED PARTS OF THE STATE AND TO DEVELOP
OPTIONS TO ADDRESS THAT NEED.

WHEREAS, access to primary health care services is the
foundation of an effective health care system; and

WHEREAS, currently, more than twenty percent of New
Mexicans have no health insurance, thus inhibiting their access
to primary and other health care services; and

WHEREAS, even New Mexicans with health insurance may
experience difficulty obtaining a primary health care provider
and receiving primary health care services due to shortages of
primary care practitioners, especially in rural and underserved
areas of the state; and

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1 WHEREAS, according to the New Mexico health policy
2 commission's 2008 report, *HM2: State Funded Primary Care*
3 *Residency Slots*, New Mexico is currently facing a critical
4 shortage of primary care health care professionals; and

5 WHEREAS, the New Mexico health policy commission reported
6 that, in 2006 in New Mexico, there were one and ninety-four
7 hundredths physicians per one thousand population, while the
8 national average was two and eighty hundredths physicians per
9 one thousand population, placing New Mexico well below the
10 national average; and

11 WHEREAS, it is estimated by the association of American
12 medical colleges that the aging of the population combined with
13 general population growth will result in a significantly
14 increased demand for primary care physicians by the year 2020;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, nationally, one-third of all physicians are over
17 the age of fifty-five and are likely to retire by the year
18 2020; and

19 WHEREAS, currently, approximately twenty percent of the
20 total primary health care provider work force in New Mexico are
21 non-physician providers, including nurse practitioners,
22 physician assistants and nurse midwives; and

23 WHEREAS, New Mexico health resources, a public-private
24 partnership agency responsible for recruitment and retention of
25 health care professionals in the state, reports that as of

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1 November 2008, it was actively recruiting for two hundred
2 forty-three primary care physicians, thirty-seven nurse
3 practitioners and thirty-two physician assistants; and

4 WHEREAS, as the state and the nation move toward coverage
5 of one hundred percent of their citizens, the disparities
6 between the number of practicing, full-time primary care
7 physicians and the need for such physicians will be
8 exacerbated; and

9 WHEREAS, nurse practitioners, midwives and physician
10 assistants are vital components of the health care delivery
11 system, providing primary care services in rural and
12 underserved areas of the state as well as in urban areas; and

13 WHEREAS, often a nurse practitioner or physician assistant
14 is the only primary health care provider in those rural and
15 underserved areas of the state; and

16 WHEREAS, ensuring an adequate supply of nurse
17 practitioners and physician assistants in rural and underserved
18 areas of the state is vital to addressing the serious work
19 force shortages that exist in those areas;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
21 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested
22 to form a task force to study the growing need for primary care
23 practitioners in rural and medically underserved parts of the
24 state and to develop options to address that need; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include

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1 representation from the New Mexico health policy commission; an
2 association representing nurse practitioners in the state; an
3 association representing physician assistants in the state; the
4 New Mexico medical board; an association representing
5 physicians; the university of New Mexico health sciences
6 center; the university of New Mexico school of medicine; other
7 institutions of higher learning that offer programs to train
8 and educate physicians and either nurse practitioners or
9 physician assistants; the New Mexico telehealth commission; and
10 others; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and
12 recommendations of the task force be presented to the interim
13 legislative health and human services committee at its November
14 2009 meeting; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
16 transmitted to the secretary of health and to the New Mexico
17 health policy commission.

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