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HOUSE MEMORIAL 14

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2010

INTRODUCED BY

Joni Marie Gutierrez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF
CONDUCTING A PILOT PROJECT TO REDUCE THE UTILIZATION OF
UNNECESSARY LABORATORY TESTING IN HOSPITALS.

WHEREAS, according to a study conducted in a major
clinical laboratory in New Mexico, much unnecessary, duplicate
and obsolete laboratory testing is routinely performed on
patients who are hospitalized; and

WHEREAS, data mining to identify inpatient tests that were
repeated within one hour, or outpatient tests that were
repeated within one day revealed that an estimated one hundred
fifty-six thousand duplicate tests were performed in New Mexico
at an annual cost of one million eight hundred seventy-two
thousand dollars (\$1,872,000); and

WHEREAS, this same study found that substantial savings

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1 could be achieved in New Mexico by replacing obsolete
2 laboratory tests with newer, more appropriate tests; and

3 WHEREAS, a study published in the *Journal of the American*
4 *Medical Association* reports that the percent of inappropriate
5 laboratory testing has been steadily rising since 1965; and

6 WHEREAS, the combined impact of duplicate, obsolete and
7 inappropriate testing in New Mexico, based on the average cost
8 derived from two separate methods of calculation, suggests that
9 more than eighteen percent of laboratory tests performed in New
10 Mexico may be unnecessary; and

11 WHEREAS, the potential savings from eliminating all
12 unnecessary testing is close to sixty million dollars
13 (\$60,000,000) to New Mexico; and

14 WHEREAS, an estimated seventy percent of medical decisions
15 are driven or monitored by laboratory test results; and

16 WHEREAS, better use of laboratory tests would likely lead
17 to better use of medical and surgical therapies and result in
18 indirect savings to the health care delivery system; and

19 WHEREAS, approaches to reduce the number of unnecessary
20 laboratory tests include direct consultation with experts, more
21 rigorous parameters for ordering laboratory tests, enhanced and
22 immediate feedback to ordering physicians regarding charges for
23 laboratory tests, results of using particular laboratory tests,
24 predictions of test results using mathematical models and
25 reminders regarding previously ordered, redundant tests; and

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1 WHEREAS, structured performance improvement activities
2 with use of best laboratory prescribing practices tied to
3 required continuing medical education are available through the
4 accreditation council for continuing medical education and the
5 American medical association; and

6 WHEREAS, two hospitals and a major clinical laboratory in
7 New Mexico are already in partnership to implement criteria
8 designed to change physician prescribing practices and reduce
9 or eliminate unnecessary laboratory testing as part of a
10 quality improvement initiative; and

11 WHEREAS, a project to pursue more widespread
12 implementation of such activities could be at least partially
13 funded through a variety of sources, including private and
14 federal government sources; and

15 WHEREAS, New Mexico is garnering attention from regional
16 clinical laboratories, other states and nongovernmental health
17 care payers for its preliminary work in addressing this
18 problem;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
20 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department
21 of health be requested to study the feasibility of conducting a
22 pilot project to reduce the utilization of unnecessary
23 laboratory testing in hospitals; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health
25 consult with and utilize the services of a statewide clinical

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1 laboratory in developing the project and identifying standards
2 for the reduction or elimination of unnecessary laboratory
3 testing in hospitals; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health
5 report to the interim legislative health and human services
6 committee by September 2010 on the feasibility of implementing
7 such a pilot project; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
9 transmitted to the secretary of health.

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