

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 417aa

50th Legislature, 1st Session, 2011

Tracking Number: 184464.2

Short Title: Native American Suicide Prevention

Sponsor(s): Senator Lynda M. Lovejoy and Other

Analyst: Pamela Herman

Date: March 15, 2011

AS AMENDED

The House Health and Governmental Affairs Committee (HHGAC) amendment makes the requirements in the bill subject to available funding.

The Senate Finance Committee (SFC) amendments to SB 417 strike the appropriation.

Original Bill Summary:

SB 417 requires the Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (IBHPC), in consultation with the Indian Affairs Department (IAD), to establish programs to provide prevention, intervention, and post-event assistance to Native American persons and entities living with suicide, attempted suicide, or the risk of suicide. The bill requires IBHPC to establish:

- a statewide clearinghouse and technical assistance program called the “New Mexico Clearinghouse for Native American Suicide Prevention” to provide culturally appropriate assistance statewide to Native Americans affected by suicide; and
- three culturally based Native American youth suicide prevention initiatives, each focused on the continuum of assistance in rural, frontier, and urban communities.

SB 417 appropriates funds to the Human Services Department (HSD) for FY 12 for the IBHPC as follows:

- \$150,000 to provide suicide prevention, intervention and post-event assistance; and
- \$300,000 to establish three culturally based youth suicide prevention initiatives.

SB 417 defines “Native American” to mean a member of a federally recognized tribe, nation, or pueblo.

Revised Fiscal Impact:

The SFC amendments strike the appropriations.

Original Fiscal Impact:

SB 417 makes two reverting appropriations from the General Fund to HSD totaling \$450,000 to accomplish the purposes of the bill.

The Legislative Finance Committee Fiscal Impact Statement (FIR) categorizes the appropriations as recurring.

Revised Fiscal Issues:

- **The HHGAC amendment makes the activities required in the bill subject to available funds.**
- **The FIR notes that SB 417a requires the HSD to work through the IBHPC to carry out the purposes of the bill without an appropriation.**

Substantive Issues:

- According to the New Mexico Department of Health:
 - while effective culturally based prevention and wellness programs are being developed, there are few resources available to implement and evaluate these models; and
 - tribal communities do not have the mental health resources or technical assistance to provide appropriate support for suicide attempts or completed suicides.
- IAD states that youth suicide crises in Mescalero and Thoreau have resulted in partnerships among tribes, the state, and the Indian Health Service to respond to youth suicide clusters, including:
 - coordination of scarce behavioral health services to provide for efficient use of all available expertise;
 - convening of a statewide Native American Youth Suicide working group to coordinate information and support for communities in crisis; and
 - allocation of funding by OptumHealth New Mexico to the IBHPC to supplement limited resources of suicide prevention, intervention, and post-event action in Indian country.

Background:

- The Public Education Department states that:
 - suicide is the second leading cause of death for Native Americans ages 12-24. It is 2.5 times higher than the national average; and
 - in New Mexico, Native American youth have the highest suicide rate compared to those in other racial or ethnic groups, 50 percent higher than Hispanic and White youth.
- IAD states that there are many causes of youth suicide in Indian communities, including:
 - unrecognized and untreated mental illness;

- isolation;
- poverty;
- loss of cultural and individual identity;
- historical trauma;
- substance abuse; and
- self-esteem issues.

Related Bills:

None as of March 15, 2011.