

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO CREATE GENDER-SPECIFIC TREATMENT STANDARDS AND RULES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS SEEKING TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS.

WHEREAS, research clearly demonstrates that women and girls face unique barriers when seeking and receiving treatment for substance abuse disorders as compared with men; and

WHEREAS, women and girls face personal and systemic barriers that prevent them from seeking and receiving treatment for substance abuse disorders; and

WHEREAS, personal barriers include the fear of reprisal from family members, the fear of not being able to care for their children or losing custody of their children, the fear of making life changes and the fear that treatment may not be kept confidential; and

WHEREAS, systemic barriers include a lack of health insurance or other financial assistance to pay for treatment, a lack of linguistic and culturally accessible services, being placed on waiting lists for treatment, the absence of treatment options for women and girls who are pregnant and the inability to obtain child care and transportation while sustaining employment and managing the requirements of other

systems of which they may be eligible, such as temporary assistance for needy families; and

WHEREAS, despite evidence that gender-specific treatment provides better outcomes for women and girls with substance abuse disorders, most traditional treatment is designed for men; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the unique needs of women and girls, many states are now establishing gender-specific treatment standards; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive model for the treatment of women, girls and their families has been developed to be used as a flexible guide that can be adapted to address community needs in building comprehensive treatment programs for women and girls with substance abuse disorders and to develop gender-specific treatment programs that will encompass all of a woman's or a girl's needs when recovering from a substance abuse disorder; and

WHEREAS, the development of gender-specific treatment best practices will help meet the unique needs of women and girls to overcome the barriers they face when seeking treatment for and recovering from substance abuse disorders; and

WHEREAS, gender-specific best practices will move New Mexico toward a vision that all women and girls can receive individualized, high quality, research-based treatment for

substance abuse disorders that will improve the chances of successful recovery and cultivate the healthy development of children and families; and

WHEREAS, the development of gender-specific treatment best practices will build on the existing capabilities and strengths of New Mexico's services to women and girls; and

WHEREAS, creating gender-specific treatment best practices for women and girls with substance abuse disorders will allow better communication to health care providers regarding concrete expectations and a general vision for improved services to women and girls; and

WHEREAS, gender-specific treatment best practices are necessary to address the needs of New Mexico women and girls seeking treatment for substance abuse disorders, including clinical treatment, clinical support and community support services; treatment services that are culturally fluent, female-specific and family-centered; and treatment methods that are individualized, nonjudgmental, trauma sensitive, respectful and based on a woman's or a girl's unique strengths as well as her needs, preferences, experiences and age; and

WHEREAS, gender-specific treatment best practices will help provide guidelines for New Mexico to help women and girls with substance abuse disorders find pathways to successful recovery that can last throughout their lifetime;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the behavioral health services division of the human services department be requested to convene a work group to create gender-specific treatment standards and rules for women and girls seeking treatment for substance abuse disorders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group research, recommend and implement best practices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group be requested to submit a report with recommendations to the legislative health and human services committee by December 1, 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of human services and the chair of the legislative health and human services committee.