

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE AND OVERDOSE TASK FORCE AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RULES AND ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOLS TO ADDRESS THE INCREASING RATE OF ADDICTION TO AND DEATHS DUE TO ACCIDENTAL OVERDOSE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

WHEREAS, the federal substance abuse and mental health services administration reports that rates of overdose deaths involving prescription drugs have increased rapidly in recent years; and

WHEREAS, prescription drugs can be just as harmful as illegal drugs if they are abused; and

WHEREAS, the federal substance abuse and mental health services administration conducted a recent review of emergency room visits for nonmedical use of opioid analgesics and found that the number of visits for their nonmedical use increased one hundred eleven percent between 2004 and 2008; and

WHEREAS, according to the office of the state medical investigator, the unintentional prescription drug overdose death rate in New Mexico increased nearly fifty percent between 2005 and 2009, from seven and three-tenths per one hundred thousand population in 2005 to ten and nine-tenths per one hundred thousand population in 2009; and

WHEREAS, the office of the state medical investigator

reports that the rate of unintentional overdose death from tranquilizers and muscle relaxants, also known as benzodiazepines, increased in New Mexico ninety-seven percent between 2005 and 2009; and

WHEREAS, the federal substance abuse and mental health services administration's 2006-2008 national survey on drug use and health estimated that fifteen thousand, or nine percent, of twelve- to-seventeen-year-olds in New Mexico reported nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers during the past year; and

WHEREAS, the federal substance abuse and mental health services administration's 2006-2008 national survey on drug use and health estimated that ninety-seven thousand, or six and one-tenth percent, of New Mexicans age twelve or older reported nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers in the past year and that roughly one-fourth met diagnostic criteria for abuse or dependence of prescription pain relievers; and

WHEREAS, the federal office of national drug control policy reports that teenagers are increasingly turning away from street drugs and using prescription drugs to get high, with the numbers of those abusing prescription drugs close to those using marijuana; and

WHEREAS, the office of national drug control policy reports that the majority of teens get prescription drugs easily and for free, often from friends or relatives; and

WHEREAS, the federal office of national drug control policy reports that adolescents are more likely than young adults to become dependent on prescription medication; and

WHEREAS, parents need to be aware of which prescription drugs are popularly abused among teenagers; and

WHEREAS, in addition to parent education, the federal substance abuse and mental health services administration recommends more systematic provider education, that more providers use prescription drug monitoring programs, that there be routine monitoring of insurance claim information for signs of inappropriate use and that providers intervene when patients use drugs inappropriately; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico medical board reports that addiction is a chronic disease needing treatment; and

WHEREAS, addicted individuals need access to high-quality treatment; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico medical board recommends that New Mexicans be educated about the high risk for overdose; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceutical manufacturers that specialize in the production of pain management drugs are working with health care professionals, law enforcement and local communities across the country to help curb diversion and abuse of medications, while ensuring they remain available for appropriate medical use; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceutical manufacturers that specialize in

the production of pain management drugs have developed an array of programs focused on education, prevention and deterrence; and

WHEREAS, to combat the abuse of prescription drugs, the New Mexico board of pharmacy has established and operates a prescription drug monitoring program; and

WHEREAS, prescribers, pharmacists and other authorized monitoring program users may request data from the state's prescription drug monitoring program via a secure web page that provides information about the type of controlled substance prescriptions filled for patients; and

WHEREAS, a recent study by the board of pharmacy's prescription drug monitoring program showed that forty-four percent of New Mexicans age ten or older filled at least one prescription for a controlled substance, schedules II to IV, during a twenty-seven-month period in 2006-2008; and

WHEREAS, despite the prevalence of prescription drug abuse among patients, there are many patients who desperately need prescription drugs, including opioids, for pain management, anxiety and other conditions; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of patients who use prescription drugs that are abused by some individuals do not in fact abuse these drugs and use them solely for their medically indicated applications; and

WHEREAS, using prescription drugs for pain, anxiety and

other indicated medical applications should not be stigmatized or assumed to constitute abuse;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to convene a task force to study the issues relating to the increasing rate of addiction and deaths due to accidental overdose of prescription drugs in the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health convene the task force with representatives from the New Mexico medical board; the children, youth and families department; the board of pharmacy; the board of nursing; the office of the state medical investigator; the university of New Mexico health sciences center; the drug enforcement administration of the United States department of justice; and trusted experts in law, health specialty practice, primary care, nursing, dentistry and other areas that the department of health identifies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested to review the programs created and rules promulgated by the task force's constituent state agencies intending to address the rate of addiction and deaths due to accidental overdose of prescription drugs and make recommendations for effective interventions by those agencies to address prescription drug abuse and accidental deaths due to their abuse; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its findings and any legislative recommendations to the legislative health and human services committee by November 1, 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of health, the executive director of the New Mexico medical board, the executive director of the board of nursing, the executive director of the board of pharmacy, the state medical investigator, the executive vice president of the university of New Mexico health sciences center and the administrator of the drug enforcement administration of the United States department of justice.