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HOUSE MEMORIAL 13

**50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011**

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

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

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1 confidential; and

2 WHEREAS, systemic barriers include a lack of health  
3 insurance or other financial assistance to pay for treatment, a  
4 lack of linguistic and culturally accessible services, being  
5 placed on waiting lists for treatment, the absence of treatment  
6 options for women and girls who are pregnant and the inability  
7 to obtain child care and transportation while sustaining  
8 employment and managing the requirements of other systems of  
9 which they may be eligible, such as temporary assistance for  
10 needy families; and

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

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

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

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

5           WHEREAS, gender-specific standards will move New Mexico  
6 toward a vision that all women and girls can receive  
7 individualized, high quality, research-based treatment for  
8 substance abuse disorders that will improve the chances of  
9 successful recovery and cultivate the healthy development of  
10 children and families; and

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

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

19           WHEREAS, gender-specific treatment standards are necessary  
20 to address the needs of New Mexico women and girls seeking  
21 treatment for substance abuse disorders, including clinical  
22 treatment, clinical support and community support services;  
23 treatment services that are culturally fluent, female-specific  
24 and family-centered; and treatment methods that are  
25 individualized, nonjudgmental, trauma sensitive, respectful and

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1 based on a woman's or a girl's unique strengths as well as her  
2 needs, preferences, experiences and age; and

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

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
8 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the behavioral  
9 health services division of the human services department be  
10 requested to convene a work group to create gender-specific  
11 treatment standards and rules for women and girls seeking  
12 treatment for substance abuse disorders; and

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

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