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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO'S ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON HOW TO ENHANCE AND EXPAND NEW MEXICO'S HARM-REDUCTION SERVICES RELATED TO OPIOID MISUSE AND DEPENDENCY.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has long been concerned about the high rates of opioid misuse and dependency and the impact on the people of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the federal centers for disease control and prevention has recently declared the United States to have a crisis and epidemic of opioid abuse and addiction; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is facing opioid overdose death rates of unprecedented proportions; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico ranks number one in the country in overdose-related deaths, as reported by the centers for disease control and prevention on November 1, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the rate for New Mexico overdose-related deaths is twenty-seven per one hundred thousand population, more than twice the national average; and

WHEREAS, nationally, overdose death rates now outnumber traffic fatality rates; and

WHEREAS, the department of health's substance abuse epidemiology unit at the university of New Mexico estimates

1 that there were nearly twenty-four thousand adult intravenous  
2 drug users in New Mexico in 2006, and others report that  
3 number to be as high as fifty thousand; and

4 WHEREAS, the federal substance abuse and mental health  
5 services administration recently conducted a review of  
6 emergency room visits for nonmedical use of opioid analgesics  
7 and found that the number of visits for nonmedical opioid use  
8 increased one hundred eleven percent between 2004 and 2008;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, people who use opioids, including heroin and  
11 prescription medications, are at risk for health-related harm  
12 associated with the use such as blood-borne infections like  
13 human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis C, skin infections  
14 at injection sites, venous damage and, ultimately, death due  
15 to overdose; and

16 WHEREAS, drug abuse and dependence is a complex issue  
17 that requires innovative approaches to harm reduction in drug  
18 use; and

19 WHEREAS, there are evidence-based approaches that are  
20 proven to work in reducing the harm associated with opioid  
21 use, including medically supervised injection facilities,  
22 opioid overdose reversal antidotes such as naloxone, access  
23 to safe syringes and access to medication-assisted treatment,  
24 including methadone and buprenorphine; and

25 WHEREAS, individuals suffering from addiction need

1 access to high-quality treatment that is health-focused, yet  
2 these individuals remain highly underserved; and

3 WHEREAS, harm reduction strategies for opioid use and  
4 overdose can save both lives and money; and

5 WHEREAS, there is a need to enhance the existing system  
6 in New Mexico and explore more comprehensive and innovative  
7 models; and

8 WHEREAS, medically supervised injection sites are  
9 controlled health care settings where drug users can more  
10 safely use drugs under clinical supervision, and where they  
11 have access to health care, counseling and referral to health  
12 and social services, including drug treatment; and

13 WHEREAS, medically supervised injection sites have  
14 proven to reduce transmission of blood-borne viruses, prevent  
15 overdose fatalities, foster safer injection practices and  
16 increase access or referrals to addiction treatment programs,  
17 including medication-assisted treatment and detoxification  
18 services; savings to taxpayers by reducing societal costs  
19 associated with costly emergency room visits and increased  
20 crime and violence; and a reduction in social harms  
21 associated with intravenous drug use, such as public  
22 disorder, public intoxication, public injecting of drugs and  
23 publicly discarded syringes; and

24 WHEREAS, medically supervised injection sites are  
25 best-suited to serve older, long-term users, who are more

1 difficult to reach through more traditional prevention and  
2 treatment settings and who often avoid, or have never had  
3 contact with, the treatment system; and

4 WHEREAS, worldwide, there are sixty-five safe injection  
5 facilities in twenty-seven cities in eight countries,  
6 including Vancouver, Canada;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
8 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the university of New Mexico's  
9 Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health policy be  
10 requested to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate how to  
11 expand and enhance opioid harm-reduction services in  
12 New Mexico; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of  
14 New Mexico's Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health  
15 policy explore emerging and novel approaches to opioid harm  
16 reduction, including exploring the feasibility of  
17 implementing a pilot medically supervised injection site,  
18 staffed with medical professionals, to reduce overdose  
19 deaths, increase access to health services and treatment and  
20 further expand access to safe injection equipment to prevent  
21 the transmission of human immunodeficiency virus and  
22 hepatitis C; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of  
24 New Mexico's Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health  
25 policy include in its study input from the department of

1 health, the children, youth and families department, the  
2 human services department, the interagency behavioral health  
3 purchasing collaborative, the behavioral health planning  
4 council, the university of New Mexico, the New Mexico public  
5 health association, the drug policy alliance, the New Mexico  
6 women's justice project, the Navajo AIDS network, the Santa  
7 Fe mountain center, casa de salud, New Mexico AIDS services,  
8 health care for the homeless, staff from established  
9 supervised injection sites, harm-reduction researchers,  
10 harm-reduction advocates, people in recovery from opioid  
11 addiction and individuals or family members who have  
12 experienced an overdose; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of  
14 New Mexico's Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health  
15 policy report its findings and any legislative  
16 recommendations to the interim legislative health and human  
17 services committee and other appropriate interim committees  
18 by November 1, 2012; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
20 transmitted to the university of New Mexico's Robert Wood  
21 Johnson foundation center for health policy and to each of the  
22 agencies, organizations and individuals named to participate  
23 in the study. \_\_\_\_\_