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HOUSE MEMORIAL 24

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO DIRECT THE
LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE TO HEAR
TESTIMONY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
TO ENSURE A SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT HOSPITAL
CREDENTIALING PROCESS FOR PHYSICIANS.

WHEREAS, an essential part of ensuring safe patient care
in any hospital is the credentialing of physicians to practice
in that hospital in a specific, appropriate type of practice;
and

WHEREAS, while varying from facility to facility, the
hospital credentialing process involves the careful observation
of guidelines such as those published by the joint commission
and the federal centers for medicare and medicaid services; and

WHEREAS, most hospitals perform extensive background

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1 checks before credentialing or re-credentialing a physician;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, the credentialing process often involves
4 consulting the national practitioner database, as well as
5 checking peer references and work, education and criminal
6 history, malpractice claims history and medicare and medicaid
7 fraud databases and other facilities' records; and

8 WHEREAS, a hospital must carefully consider all elements
9 in its credentialing process, as an unduly cumbersome or
10 lengthy credentialing process will result in inefficiency
11 without augmenting patient safety, a result that is neither in
12 the hospital's nor the physician's best interests; and

13 WHEREAS, the body responsible for credentialing a
14 physician for a hospital is a committee usually made up of a
15 hospital's staff physicians; and

16 WHEREAS, the joint commission, which accredits hospitals,
17 requires that hospitals repeat credentialing checks on
18 physicians at least every two years; and

19 WHEREAS, when a physician wishes to perform a new type of
20 procedure, the hospital's peer review committee reviews the
21 procedure and the physician's training and ability to perform
22 that procedure before approving the procedure; and

23 WHEREAS, one challenge to an effective hospital
24 credentialing process is the need for a committee to be
25 knowledgeable about any procedure it authorizes, despite the

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1 difficulty of being fully informed about a wide variety of
2 innovative procedures; and

3 WHEREAS, another challenge to hospital credentialing
4 committees is that it can be difficult for colleagues to
5 thoroughly question and vet their fellow staff physicians while
6 maintaining a spirit of cooperation and collegiality among
7 physicians at that hospital; and

8 WHEREAS, without proper credentialing, a hospital's
9 patients may be subject to the unsafe practice of medicine by a
10 physician who is not qualified to engage in that practice,
11 which may result in bodily harm or even death; and

12 WHEREAS, a hospital that does not properly vet a physician
13 through the credentialing process may be subject to enormous
14 liability for any malpractice that results;

15 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
16 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico
17 legislative council be requested to direct the legislative
18 health and human services committee to conduct a hearing on the
19 subject of hospital physician credentialing; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico legislative
21 council direct the legislative health and human services
22 committee to receive testimony from experts on the
23 credentialing process and make recommendations regarding
24 policies and procedures to provide a thorough, effective and
25 efficient credentialing process that ensures patient safety;

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1 and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative health and
3 human services committee be directed to receive testimony on
4 the subject of hospital credentialing from experts that include
5 the joint commission, the New Mexico medical board, the board
6 of osteopathic medical examiners, the hospital industry,
7 medical and osteopathic physicians and individuals with legal
8 expertise in the field of medical malpractice; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
10 transmitted to the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative
11 council and the chair and vice chair of the legislative health
12 and human services committee.