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SENATE MEMORIAL 80

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

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO'S ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY TO CONTINUE THE WORK OF THE DRUG POLICY TASK FORCE IN ORDER TO COMPLETE ITS COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN BASED ON THE FOUR-PILLAR APPROACH.

WHEREAS, the forty-ninth legislature passed Senate Memorial 33 requesting the university of New Mexico's Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health policy to create a drug policy task force to evaluate New Mexico's approach to alleviating the negative consequences associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs; and

WHEREAS, in the first session of the fiftieth legislature, the senate passed Senate Memorial 18, which continued the drug policy task force's work during the 2011 interim; and

WHEREAS, the drug policy task force met often during the

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1 2010 and 2011 interims, inviting designees appointed by the New
2 Mexico legislative council; representatives from the office of
3 the governor, the office of the lieutenant governor, the
4 corrections department, the department of health, the children,
5 youth and families department, the human services department,
6 the public education department, the legislative finance
7 committee, the DWI grant council, the aging and long-term
8 services department, county detention facilities, the
9 administrative office of the courts, the department of public
10 safety, the interagency behavioral health purchasing
11 collaborative, the behavioral health planning council, the
12 university of New Mexico, the New Mexico association of
13 counties, the drug policy alliance and the New Mexico women's
14 justice project; two individuals with criminal drug
15 convictions; and two individuals in recovery from substance
16 abuse; and

17 WHEREAS, the drug policy task force used a four-pillar
18 approach to examine prevention, treatment, harm reduction and
19 enforcement in order to develop strategies for effective change
20 in New Mexico's drug policy; and

21 WHEREAS, the task force analyzed current approaches to
22 drug policy and made recommendations on prevention and
23 treatment; and

24 WHEREAS, the drug policy task force was directed to
25 compile a list of expenditures for prevention, treatment and

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1 harm reduction and an assessment of the effectiveness of
2 current programs; and

3 WHEREAS, the task force was directed to develop a list of
4 evaluation measures to include the impact of drug abuse on
5 youth, rates of drug overdose fatalities, rates of HIV/AIDS and
6 hepatitis, access to treatment, the number of incarcerated,
7 nonviolent drug law offenders, access to alternatives to
8 incarceration and racial disparities exacerbated by the
9 criminal justice system; and

10 WHEREAS, the drug policy task force presented its findings
11 to the interim legislative health and human services committee,
12 the interim courts, corrections and justice committee, the
13 legislative finance committee and the behavioral health
14 services subcommittee of the legislative health and human
15 services committee; and

16 WHEREAS, the task force informed these legislative
17 committees and subcommittee that there is currently an
18 "epidemic" of heroin use among high schoolers, with an
19 estimated five percent of high school students in Bernalillo
20 county alone having used heroin in the last thirty days; and

21 WHEREAS, the task force reported that eighty-five percent
22 of prisoners in the state have a substance abuse problem, yet
23 the ratio is one substance abuse treatment professional to
24 every one hundred thirteen prisoners; and

25 WHEREAS, the task force observed that substance addiction

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1 is a chronic disease that often is not treated as a disease but
2 as "bad behavior" and has recommended that the current
3 treatment approach be reevaluated to direct efforts to
4 addressing underlying conditions leading to addiction; and

5 WHEREAS, the task force reported that, in 2010, more
6 people died of unintentional prescription drug overdoses than
7 heroin overdoses and recommended legislation in order to
8 address prescription drug abuse; and

9 WHEREAS, the task force reported that, despite the
10 severity of the substance abuse problem in New Mexico and the
11 seven-dollar (\$7.00) to eight-dollar (\$8.00) return on each one
12 dollar (\$1.00) invested in substance abuse treatment, there is
13 a scarcity of appropriate treatment opportunities because of
14 factors that include insurers' refusal to pay for inpatient
15 treatment and a lack of providers; and

16 WHEREAS, after two interims of research and analysis, the
17 task force has begun to identify best practices in prevention,
18 treatment and harm reduction in order to make recommendations
19 for legislative action to address the crisis in substance
20 abuse;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
22 OF NEW MEXICO that the university of New Mexico's Robert Wood
23 Johnson foundation center for health policy be requested to
24 continue the work of the drug policy task force in order to
25 complete its comprehensive statewide strategic plan based on

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1 the four-pillar approach; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force continue to
3 evaluate New Mexico's approach to alleviating the negative
4 consequences associated with the use of alcohol and other
5 drugs; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present its
7 final comprehensive statewide strategic plan, including
8 conclusions and recommendations, to the legislative health and
9 human services committee or its behavioral health services
10 subcommittee, the legislative finance committee, the courts,
11 corrections and justice committee and other appropriate interim
12 legislative committees by November 2012; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the strategic plan and all of
14 its conclusions and recommendations be made available to other
15 interested legislative committees, executive agencies and the
16 public through publication on the center for health policy's
17 web site; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the director of the university of New Mexico's
20 Robert Wood Johnson foundation center for health policy and to
21 each of the agencies and organizations named in this memorial
22 as participants on the task force.