

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF REGULATION AND LICENSING TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE THE NEED FOR RECREATIONAL THERAPY LICENSURE AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE PRACTICE OF RECREATIONAL THERAPY IN THE STATE.

WHEREAS, recreational therapists are currently employed statewide in a wide variety of contexts to help individuals who have experienced an illness or disability return to greater participation in life activities through treatment service designed to restore, remediate and rehabilitate those individuals' level of functioning and independence; and

WHEREAS, recreational therapists work with individuals of all ages in a wide range of settings, including rehabilitation hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, schools, veteran's hospitals, long-term care facilities, home-care settings, substance-abuse facilities and parks and recreation departments; and

WHEREAS, recreational therapists employ an individualized recreational therapy treatment plan that identifies an individual's goals, objectives and treatment intervention strategies; and

WHEREAS, recreational therapists help individuals in their care to reduce or alleviate pain or manage pain to

minimize its impact; and

WHEREAS, recreational therapists assist individuals in identifying, designing, caring for and using adaptive recreational equipment; and

WHEREAS, the practice of recreational therapy shares similarities with the practice of physical therapy and occupational therapy, where the physical therapist assists individuals in preventing and alleviating impairments and functional limitations and occupational therapists assist individuals in preventing or alleviating limitations on participating in everyday life activities; and

WHEREAS, recreational therapy focuses on helping individuals to enjoy their lives through recreation and leisure development; and

WHEREAS, individuals who practice recreational therapy and who are certified as recreational therapist specialists through the national council for therapeutic recreation certification must meet established standards for certification, including standards for minimum education, experience and continuing professional development as well as adhere in their practices to standards of conduct and be subject to a disciplinary process; and

WHEREAS, currently in New Mexico, an individual may practice recreational therapy without any licensure, certification, scope of practice, practice standards or

disciplinary process applying to that individual's practice;
and

WHEREAS, individuals treated by recreational therapists who are not subject to professional licensure, certification, scope of practice, practice standards or disciplinary process may be at risk for substandard care without accountability;
and

WHEREAS, in the interest of public health, safety and welfare, it is important to protect the public from the unprofessional, improper, incompetent and unlawful practice of recreational therapy; and

WHEREAS, a scope of practice, training and continuing education standards at the state level would provide the public with protection from the unprofessional, improper, incompetent and unlawful practice of recreational therapy; and

WHEREAS, advocates for the safe and accountable practice of recreational therapy hope that legislation may be passed to create a system for offering licensure to those individuals who receive certification through the national council for therapeutic recreation certification; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the superintendent of regulation and licensing be requested to convene a task force to examine the need for recreational therapy licensure in the state and make recommendations for

legislation to provide for the safe and accountable practice of recreational therapy in the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include representatives from the office of the governor; recreational therapists who practice in the state; the board of examiners for occupational therapy; the physical therapy board; legislative finance committee staff; legislative council service staff; and the chair of the department of allied health at western New Mexico university; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor, the superintendent of regulation and licensing, the chair of the board of examiners for occupational therapy, the chair of the physical therapy board, the president of western New Mexico university, the chair of the department of allied health at western New Mexico university, the director of the legislative finance committee and the director of the legislative council service.