

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO APPOINT A
3 TASK FORCE TO PREPARE LEGISLATION IMPLEMENTING DENTAL
4 THERAPY IN THE STATE.

5
6 WHEREAS, there is a dental health care services
7 shortage throughout most of New Mexico; and

8 WHEREAS, the federal health resources and services
9 administration's February 2015 report stated that New Mexico
10 will have a dentist shortage of one hundred ninety-five
11 dentists and a surplus of two hundred ninety-one dental
12 hygienists in 2025; and

13 WHEREAS, people living in poverty and in rural
14 communities are much less likely to receive good oral health
15 care; and

16 WHEREAS, poor oral health is linked with multiple
17 health problems, including adverse pregnancy outcomes,
18 respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and diabetes;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, nontreatment of dental caries may be
21 associated with inappropriate use of emergency room care,
22 resulting in higher health care costs and incomplete care;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, the 2013 New Mexico health care workforce
25 committee, made up of experts in health care, health care

1 workforce and state health policy, issued a report that
2 concluded that New Mexico does not have enough dental
3 providers to meet current or future demand; and

4 WHEREAS, the states of Alaska, Maine and Minnesota, as
5 well as the United Kingdom and New Zealand, have established
6 the practice of dental therapy to address the need for
7 skilled dental health care in urban, rural, frontier and
8 tribal areas; and

9 WHEREAS, the eight northern Indian pueblos council,
10 inc., and the ten southern pueblo governor's council have
11 both passed resolutions in support of legislation
12 establishing the licensure and practice of dental therapists
13 in the state; and

14 WHEREAS, since 2013, the Navajo Nation has endorsed
15 legislation establishing the licensure and practice of
16 dental therapists in the state; and

17 WHEREAS, the legislative health and human services
18 committee has repeatedly endorsed legislation to license and
19 authorize the practice of dental therapists since 2013; and

20 WHEREAS, the 2013 New Mexico health care workforce
21 committee report recommended that the legislature revisit
22 the concept of dental therapists as an additional way to
23 provide care to underserved areas of the state; and

24 WHEREAS, after many years of effort, reaching a
25 consensus on legislation has failed, the parties are at an

1 impasse and legislative guidance is necessary;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
3 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council
4 be requested to establish a "dental therapy task force" to
5 prepare legislation for introduction in the 2016 legislative
6 session establishing the licensure and practice of dental
7 therapists in the state; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the dental therapy task
9 force be requested to present, by October 1, 2015, proposed
10 legislation and oral presentation to the legislative health
11 and human services committee; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the dental
13 therapy task force include, and be appointed, as follows:

14 A. one member of the New Mexico house of
15 representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of
16 representatives;

17 B. one member of the New Mexico house of
18 representatives, appointed by the house minority floor
19 leader;

20 C. one member of the New Mexico senate,
21 appointed by the president pro tempore of the senate;

22 D. one member of the New Mexico senate,
23 appointed by the senate minority floor leader;

24 E. six members appointed by the New Mexico
25 legislative council from a list of names provided by the

1 New Mexico dental association; and

2 F. six members appointed by the New Mexico
3 legislative council from a list of names provided by the
4 New Mexico dental hygienists' association; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico legislative
6 council charge the legislative council service with hiring an
7 impartial facilitator that is chosen from lists of candidates
8 provided by the New Mexico dental association and the
9 New Mexico dental hygienists' association and with providing
10 administrative support for monthly meetings of the dental
11 therapy task force, beginning in June 2015; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
13 transmitted to the president pro tempore of the senate; the
14 speaker of the house of representatives; the president of
15 the New Mexico dental association; the president of the
16 New Mexico dental hygienists' association; and the director
17 of the legislative council service. _____

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