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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Campos ORIGINAL DATE 3/4/2015  
 LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Psychologist Licensure Task Force SM 109

ANALYST Hartzler

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
<b>Total</b>		\$15.0	\$0.0	\$15.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates HM 113, Psychologist Licensure Task Force

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)  
 Department of Health (DOH)

#### No Response Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Memorial

Senate Memorial 109 requests that HED convene a task force to evaluate the quality of online study courses for advanced degrees in psychology and behavioral health, the state's licensing procedures, licensure eligibility requirements and corresponding regulations for psychologists.

The task force should consist of representatives from

- RLD,
- the Human Services Department's (HSD's) behavioral health services division,
- the New Mexico Association of School Psychologists,
- the New Mexico Psychological Association,
- the New Mexico State Board of Psychologists Examiners,
- and others

In conjunction with task force activities, the memorial requests DOH hold meetings with students and representatives of nontraditional doctoral programs excluded from the American Psychological Association's accrediting process due to a program's use of online education.

Any recommended changes to the state's licensing procedures, licensure eligibility requirements or corresponding regulations are requested to be presented to the Legislature by December 1, 2015.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

If implemented, HM 113 would increase operational expenses of both HED and DOH in completing work of the task force and assessing merits of behavioral health programs using online educational delivery methods.

RLD notes that it would incur costs associated with participating in task force meetings and activities.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

According to the memorial, there are behavioral health practitioners who are unable to be licensed to practice psychology in the New Mexico because they lack a doctoral degree from an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited program. Currently, the APA does not allow accreditation of programs that are substantially online or use distance learning, and the state requires licensing applicants to have a doctoral degree from an APA-accredited program. Generally, individuals who received degrees from programs that are predominantly on-line cannot receive state licensure.

To address the shortage of trained behavioral health practitioners, particularly licensed psychologists, and the great needs for behavioral health services in the state, the memorial proposes to study the quality of non-accredited programs to determine whether (1) such programs, while not APA-accredited, may satisfy academic and practice standards and (2) licensure requirements and corresponding regulations should be amended to allow practice by individuals with doctoral degrees from non-APA accredited programs.

### **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The task force would be required to provide a recommendation on regulations and licensure requirements by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Legislative committees or RLD could request updates on the task force's progress during the 2015 interim.

### **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

SM 109 duplicates HM 113.

### **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

Individuals who have earned advanced degrees from non-APA accredited programs will not be eligible to be a licensed psychologist in New Mexico.