

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current and previously issued FIRs are available on the NM Legislative Website (www.nmlegis.gov) and may also be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Bash/Chasey/
D. Armstrong/ ORIGINAL DATE 2/5/19
CH, Trujillo/Herrera LAST UPDATED _____ HB 297
 SHORT TITLE Medical Investigators Grief Services Program SB _____
 ANALYST Gaussoin

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY19	FY20		
	\$360.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Higher Education Department (HED)

No Responses Received
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center (UNMHSC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 297 appropriates \$360 thousand from the general fund to the University of New Mexico for the Grief Services Program of the Office of the Medical Investigator.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$360 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY20 shall revert to the general fund.

HED reports the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center (UNM-HSC) did not submit a request for the grief program for possible inclusion in the department's higher education funding recommendation. HED has a formal process for reviewing earmarked budget requests for higher education institutions.

The Office of the Medical Investigator received \$5.3 million in FY19 and the LFC recommended \$5.3 million for FY20.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to information on the Office of the Medical Center website page on the grief program (<https://omi.unm.edu/services/index.html>), the Grief Services Program is staffed by licensed, master's level mental health professionals and an integral part of the agency. Services include individual and family counseling and psychotherapy; telephone consultation, home visits, and other crisis intervention; support groups; advocacy; and the facilitation of meetings with pathologists or investigators to discuss autopsy reports.

The agency also provides grief education and training to law enforcement, emergency responders, nurses, teachers, and others who request it.

The website notes OMI is required by law to be involved in certain investigations and its commitment to provide accurate and timely information about the condition of death led to the creation of the Grief Services Program.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

HED recommends UNM develop performance measures for the program in coordination with the department.

HFG/al