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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/22/19

SPONSOR Ortiz y Pino LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Medical Investigator Grief Services Program SB 496

ANALYST Hawker

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation					Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23		
	\$360.0				Recurring	General Fund

Parenthesis () indicate expenditure decreases

Duplicates HB 297

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

No Response Received

University of New Mexico Health Sciences (UNMHSC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 496 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. Higher education institutions in New Mexico do not revert unexpended funding back to the state's 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 general fund appropriations in FY19. The LFC recommended \$5.3 million for FY20. HB2/HAFCS contains an appropriation of \$5.3 million.

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.

VKH/sb