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**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS  
2024 REGULAR SESSION**

**WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, EMAIL ANALYSIS TO:**

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*{Include the bill no. in the email subject line, e.g., HB2, and only attach one bill analysis and related documentation per email message}*

**SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

*{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

*Click all that apply:*  
**Original**     **Amendment**      
**Correction**     **Substitute**   

**Date** 2024-02-06  
**Bill No:** SM11

**Sponsor:** Ortiz y Pino, Gerald                      **Agency Name and Code**    NMHED  
**Short**    BEHAVIORAL HEALTH                      **Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Title:**    EXPANSION                                      **Person Writing**    Chisholm, Mark  
**Phone:** 5052716754                                      **Email** mark.chisholm@hed.n

**SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**

**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY24	FY25		
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

**REVENUE (dollars in thousands)**

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY24	FY25	FY26		

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

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

	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>3 Year Total Cost</b>	<b>Recurring or Nonrecurring</b>	<b>Fund Affected</b>
<b>Total</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

**SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

**BILL SUMMARY**

SM11 requests that the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) conduct two studies to:

1. identify and recommend strategies for providing free tuition to students in graduate-level psychiatric nursing, psychology, social work, and counseling programs; and
2. identify and recommend strategies for expanding two-year behavioral health education programs at branch and community colleges.

NMHED is requested to report findings and recommendations by July 15, 2024 to the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee.

Copies of the memorial are transmitted to the Secretary of Higher Education and the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

In SB192 in 2023, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) received two appropriations of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to carry out functions very similar to the two tasks outlined in SM11. This funding has not yet been encumbered and the NMHED

would be able to utilize this funding to accomplish a study as outlined in SM11. It is unclear, however, whether or not the funding will be sufficient to gain the expected outcomes. It is also important to note that the funding reverts on June 30, 2024, which may also impact the ability to issue a Request For Application (RFA), issue the award, and expend the funds by that date.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

New Mexico faces a significant shortage of behavioral health providers, which means many residents struggle to access essential mental health and substance abuse treatment. Many, especially in rural areas, find it difficult to find timely care due to the provider shortage. Data suggests only 18.2% of the need for mental health professionals is met in New Mexico, compared to the national average of 27.7%.

The first task specified in SM11 is to recommend ways to provide free tuition to students in graduate-level behavioral health programs. New Mexico Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are adding to the number of behavioral health graduates. In 2022-23, 525 individuals graduated with a master's degree in behavioral health, the highest number ever. 90 additional students received a graduate certificate in a behavioral health field, and there were 9 doctorates awarded. In fall 2022 there were almost 1,600 graduate students were enrolled in behavioral health programs. Providing free tuition for this many students could cost upwards of twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000). The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) does have the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP) in place. The purpose of the HPLRP is to provide repayment for outstanding student loans of practicing health professionals. As a condition of the program, a health professional must make a three-year service commitment to practice full-time in a designated medical shortage area in New Mexico.

The second task is to recommend strategies for expanding two-year behavioral health programs at branch and community colleges. In 2022-23, there were 8 associate degrees and 7 undergraduate certificates being offered by branch and community colleges. A key factor in approving new programs is to ensure that jobs are available for graduates of these programs and/or that transfer pathways are in place so that these students can seamlessly transition to a bachelor's degree and then to a graduate program.

## PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no performance measures identified in SM11.

## ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) would need to either carry out the two requested studies or issue requests for proposals for each study.

## CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Supports two of the appropriations made to the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) by SB192 in 2023.

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

It may not prove feasible to complete these studies by the July 15, 2024 deadline.

## OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

N/A

## ALTERNATIVES

The Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP) would continue to assist medical professionals working in behavioral health in under-served areas of the state to pay their student loans.

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

If SM11 does not pass, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) would continue with the studies called for in SB192 in 2023.

## AMENDMENTS

N/A