

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO HOSPITALS URGENT CARE TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO URGENT CARE SERVICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO HOSPITALS SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico hospitals system of hospitals and clinics were instituted to serve the public; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico hospitals constitute the state's largest public hospital system; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico health sciences center, including its hospitals, is a teaching, research and health care delivery institution known for establishing best practices in the field of medicine; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico hospitals system consists of six inpatient facilities: the main hospital; the Carrie Tingley hospital; the children's hospital; the children's psychiatric center; the psychiatric center; and the cancer center; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico hospitals system consists of many outpatient facilities, including six family health clinics; twenty-one centers of excellence; forty-seven specialty clinics and programs; five family planning clinics; seven school-based clinics; and a trauma program; and

WHEREAS, none of the university of New Mexico hospitals' many clinics and programs offer evening or weekend hours for walk-in patients; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico hospitals offer one urgent care center, which is limited to simple urgent care issues and charges the same expensive fees as the emergency room; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico hospitals are a vital component of the health care delivery system in the state; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico hospitals serve a disproportionate share of Albuquerque and much of the state's uninsured and underinsured population; and

WHEREAS, much of the state's uninsured and underinsured population only enter the health care system via visits to the emergency room; and

WHEREAS, currently, the only way most patients may be seen during evenings and weekends for non-emergency care in the university of New Mexico hospitals system is to go to one of the university of New Mexico hospitals' emergency rooms; and

WHEREAS, at a university of New Mexico hospital emergency department, non-emergency cases must wait while emergency cases are given first priority; and

WHEREAS, the volume of patients seen at the university

of New Mexico hospitals' emergency departments is enormous, significantly due to the addition of non-emergency cases seen there; and

WHEREAS, the cost of seeing patients in an emergency department is quite high compared to other clinical settings, which means that patients, the university and other payers experience much greater medical costs than is likely necessary;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of health be requested to convene a university of New Mexico hospitals urgent care task force composed of:

A. the chief executive officer of the university of New Mexico hospitals;

B. a representative from the committee of interns and residents at the university of New Mexico hospitals;

C. a provider from one of the clinics of the university of New Mexico hospitals;

D. a member of the university of New Mexico hospital board of trustees;

E. a representative from the department of health with expertise in analyzing data related to health care delivery and administration;

F. two primary care physicians who are neither employed by nor under contract with the university of New

Mexico health sciences center, but who see a large number of uninsured patients;

G. a representative from the community coalition for health care access;

H. a representative who is a member of and resides on land belonging to a Native American nation, tribe or pueblo located wholly or partially within New Mexico; and

I. a member of a Native American nation, tribe or pueblo who lives in an off-reservation urban area and is a New Mexico resident; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of New Mexico hospitals urgent care task force analyze:

A. the current population of patients that the university of New Mexico hospitals see in their emergency departments, including patients' geographic origins, income and insurance status and the reasons for seeking care;

B. the costs and benefits of opening some of the clinics in the university of New Mexico hospitals system for non-emergency, urgent care for walk-in cases; and

C. the potential health outcomes when comparing the existing situation, in which the university of New Mexico hospitals system provides care to non-emergency, walk-in cases on evenings and weekends, with a potentially expanded urgent care system for seeing non-emergency cases in a timely manner and on a walk-in basis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of New Mexico hospitals urgent care task force report its findings to the interim legislative health and human services committee by November 1, 2010; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of health; the chair and vice chair of the legislative health and human services committee; the chief executive officer of the university of New Mexico hospitals; and the coordinator for the Bernalillo county community health council.