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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 12

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

Phil A. Griego

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF
STATE STATUTES TO CREATE AN OFFICE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS
IN STATUTE.

WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to experience challenges in
the improvement of health outcomes and addressing health
disparities and socioeconomic conditions influencing health
status and economic development; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to experience critical
shortages of providers in primary, oral and behavioral health
care, particularly in rural and inner-city areas; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is a predominantly rural state with a
high percentage of the rural population lacking access to
health care services, experiencing food insecurity and gaps in
transportation and lacking access to behavioral and oral health

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1 services; and

2 WHEREAS, there is substantial evidence that comprehensive
3 coordination of care for individuals with chronic diseases and
4 the provision of information regarding preventive care can
5 improve individual health status, create a healthier
6 population, reduce the costs of health care and increase
7 appropriate access to health care; and

8 WHEREAS, community health workers, promotoras and
9 community health representatives, hereinafter collectively
10 referred to as community health workers, have demonstrated
11 success in increasing access to care in underserved
12 communities; providing culturally appropriate prevention and
13 disease management education; providing translating and
14 interpreting services for health care encounters; improving
15 health through care coordination and by increasing individual
16 health literacy and advocacy; organizing to enable community
17 health improvement; and increasing efficiencies with
18 accompanying improvement in health outcomes; and

19 WHEREAS, because people with disabilities are a
20 particularly vulnerable population and New Mexico has a twenty-
21 two percent incidence of disability, the familiarity and
22 trusting relationships with the communities and families served
23 by community health workers make these workers valuable
24 partners in reducing the added risks of isolation and inability
25 to access appropriate care by disabled residents in New Mexico;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, community health workers can aid in ensuring
3 physical, communication and information access to people with
4 disabilities of all ages and can help increase awareness among
5 individuals, families and members about the benefits of
6 utilizing assistive technology for health and long-term service
7 delivery in maintaining a healthy life; and

8 WHEREAS, community health workers also support compliance
9 with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and

10 WHEREAS, the United States department of labor has
11 recognized and defined community health workers as health
12 professionals under occupational definitions; and

13 WHEREAS, the federal Patient Protection and Affordable
14 Care Act identifies and sets out roles for community health
15 workers as critical providers of health education, care
16 management, enrollment assistance and access to care for
17 populations eligible for public and private programs,
18 prevention of duplicative care, increased quality of care,
19 increased services to individuals and families facing chronic,
20 long-term conditions and increased services to families that
21 would benefit from services that support maternal and child
22 health; and

23 WHEREAS, efforts are under way to train community health
24 workers for employment opportunities in providing health and
25 social services in rural, tribal and urban areas; but, thus

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1 far, financing for those trained has not been developed nor is
2 the training standardized or coordinated; and

3 WHEREAS, at least seventeen states are developing or
4 implementing certification processes and financing options for
5 community health workers; and

6 WHEREAS, the secretary of health created, pursuant to
7 Senate Joint Memorial 76 from the 2003 regular legislative
8 session, an office of community health workers within the
9 public health division of the department of health by executive
10 appointment, but the office does not reside in public health
11 statutes and, therefore, has no permanent authorization; and

12 WHEREAS, the secretary of health has appointed an advisory
13 committee that has met for the past two years; and

14 WHEREAS, the advisory committee has studied, evaluated and
15 observed the benefits of community health workers in a variety
16 of health care settings within communities, clinics, hospitals
17 and public health offices in conjunction with the office of
18 community health workers; and

19 WHEREAS, the advisory committee has determined that the
20 department of health is the agency to coordinate training and
21 certification of community health workers and their trainers
22 and training programs and to develop and maintain a registry of
23 certified community health workers;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested

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1 to conduct a review and analysis of state statutes for the
2 purpose of recommending to the fiftieth legislature, second
3 session, legislation that will create in statute an office of
4 community health workers; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of community health
6 workers be requested to develop for implementation by July 1,
7 2012 a statewide program for the certification of community
8 health workers in areas of employment and service that require
9 such certification; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the statewide program address
11 training for community health workers that will be available
12 within the communities to be served and, to the extent
13 possible, to all those pursuing a career in community health
14 and ensure that such training include community health care
15 competencies and certification as required for the use of
16 informatics and related technology, medical terminology and
17 electronic medical records and systems and other skills to
18 maximize the talents and employability of the community health
19 workers; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the certification program
21 accommodate the experiences, competencies and training of the
22 existing community health workers in place as of July 1, 2012;
23 and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that for the purposes of oversight
25 and continuous improvement, the department of health be

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1 requested to maintain an advisory committee that shall be
2 representative of community health workers and community health
3 representative professions; higher educational institutions,
4 community colleges, vocational schools and branches of higher
5 education; state agencies and other organizations charged with
6 the delivery, administration or financing of health and social
7 services; community provider organizations, including the
8 professional associations; and other potential employers; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the advisory group continually
10 review best practices using community health workers that
11 result in increased access and efficiencies; reduced costs; and
12 improved health outcomes, including a lower incidence of
13 disabilities and death; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health be
15 requested to develop a recommended budget and provide
16 organizational details and program activities of the proposed
17 office; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health be
19 requested to submit the budget recommendations and program
20 components to the legislature for consideration in the fiftieth
21 legislature, second session; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the secretary of health.