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SENATE MEMORIAL 7

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024

INTRODUCED BY
Leo Jaramillo

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO DECLARE THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 14 THROUGH OCTOBER 18, 2024 "FENTANYL POISONING AWARENESS WEEK" AND TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS AND GOVERNING BODIES OF CHARTER SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE BY PROVIDING AGE-APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION ADDRESSING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF AND ADDICTION TO FENTANYL.

WHEREAS, New Mexico, like every state in the nation, is facing an unprecedented loss of lives due to opioid overdoses; and

WHEREAS, opioids are narcotic medications prescribed by doctors and used by patients to treat pain, and opioids can affect parts of the brain and body that regulate mood, blood pressure and breathing; and

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1 WHEREAS, fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid
2 prescribed for the treatment of extreme pain, fentanyl and
3 fentanyl analogues are now found in many street drugs and even
4 a small amount can cause a person to overdose; and

5 WHEREAS, illicit fentanyl is showing up in pills, heroin,
6 methamphetamines and cocaine, causing deaths, and fentanyl
7 overdoses have increased dramatically since the beginning of
8 the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic; and

9 WHEREAS, according to an August 24, 2023 report by the
10 legislative finance committee, New Mexico's drug overdose death
11 rate was the sixth highest in the nation in 2021, and the
12 department of health reported that in that same year, fifty-six
13 percent of New Mexico's overdoses involved fentanyl; and

14 WHEREAS, the report by the legislative finance committee
15 indicates that fentanyl deaths surged after 2019, compounding
16 the already high overdose death rate from methamphetamines and
17 other opioids, and according to the department of health,
18 methamphetamine and fentanyl are now the most common causes of
19 drug overdose deaths in New Mexico; and

20 WHEREAS, in 2021, five hundred seventy-four New Mexicans
21 died from a fentanyl-related overdose and four hundred eighty-
22 eight died from a methamphetamine-related overdose. In total,
23 one thousand twenty-nine New Mexicans died of drug overdoses in
24 2021, roughly three people per day; and

25 WHEREAS, although New Mexico has targeted significant

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1 funding and resources to address substance use disorders
2 through evidence-based harm reduction and treatment programs,
3 the state has not yet been able to reverse trends in substance-
4 related deaths, which have increased in recent years; and

5 WHEREAS, there has been a decline from a decade ago in the
6 use of drugs and alcohol as reported in the youth risk behavior
7 survey used to measure behaviors and experiences that can lead
8 to death and disability among young adults, but the survey does
9 not ask questions about fentanyl or synthetic opioid use and
10 the rates of drug use among New Mexico youth remain higher than
11 national averages; and

12 WHEREAS, as stated in the legislative finance committee
13 report, the national institutes of health suggest that
14 interventions in early childhood can help prevent future drug
15 use; and

16 WHEREAS, New Mexico public schools are uniquely positioned
17 to increase awareness among the state's youth regarding the
18 risks associated with the use of and addiction to fentanyl and
19 to provide research-based fentanyl use and addiction
20 instruction along with resources for preventing overdose
21 deaths; and

22 WHEREAS, the federal government's substance abuse and
23 mental health services administration recognizes the month of
24 October as national substance abuse prevention month; and

25 WHEREAS, New Mexico can increase drug abuse prevention

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1 awareness and specifically highlight the risks associated with
2 the use of and addiction to fentanyl by providing age-
3 appropriate information to public school students;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
5 OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department be requested
6 to declare the week of October 14 through October 18, 2024
7 "Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Week"; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
9 department be requested to encourage local school boards and
10 governing bodies of charter schools to participate in and
11 promote Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Week by providing age-
12 appropriate educational activities and information addressing
13 the risks associated with the use of and addiction to fentanyl;
14 and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
16 transmitted to the public education department for appropriate
17 distribution.