

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE CREATION OF A STATEWIDE TASK FORCE TO ASSESS  
3 AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT AND PRENATAL  
4 CARE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS.

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6 WHEREAS, the Family Preservation Act affirms the state's  
7 policy to support families and emphasize the responsibilities  
8 of parents and the state in the healthy development in  
9 children and the family as an institution; and

10 WHEREAS, New Mexico has a commitment to strengthen  
11 families in crisis and at risk of losing their children so  
12 that children can remain safely in their own homes; and

13 WHEREAS, prenatal medical care is recommended for women  
14 before and during pregnancy to improve pregnancy outcomes  
15 through prevention and detection of and early intervention in  
16 problems; and

17 WHEREAS, the New Mexico legislature has supported  
18 prenatal care and protected the confidentiality of the  
19 practitioner-patient relationship; and

20 WHEREAS, substance abuse treatment is a proven public  
21 safety and health measure; and

22 WHEREAS, the state is keenly aware that pregnant,  
23 substance-using women and their children suffer from the  
24 adverse effects of addiction, and the state is dedicated to  
25 enhancing and mobilizing the health and human services

1 programs that these individuals need; and

2 WHEREAS, pregnant women with substance abuse problems  
3 may not seek prenatal care because of stigma and fear; and

4 WHEREAS, one of the best opportunities to approach and  
5 intervene with women with substance abuse problems is during  
6 pregnancy, when motivation is high to seek treatment for  
7 addiction; and

8 WHEREAS, early intervention efforts during the prenatal  
9 period increase the likelihood that women will successfully  
10 recover from alcohol and other drug abuse; and

11 WHEREAS, a continuum of prenatal and postnatal services  
12 is needed to help women successfully parent their children,  
13 maintain recovery from substance abuse and address complex  
14 social needs; and

15 WHEREAS, the social and financial costs to incarcerate a  
16 woman with substance abuse problems far outweigh the costs of  
17 providing specialized prenatal and family-oriented substance  
18 abuse treatment; and

19 WHEREAS, prominent public health and medical  
20 organizations agree that a punitive approach to drug use  
21 during pregnancy has been shown to erode women's willingness  
22 to seek health care or to confide in their health care  
23 providers if they do seek such care; and

24 WHEREAS, these organizations include the New Mexico  
25 section of the American college of obstetricians and

1 gynecologists, the New Mexico public health association, the  
2 New Mexico nurses association, the American college of  
3 physicians, the national association of social workers, the  
4 national association of social workers-New Mexico, the  
5 American college of obstetricians and gynecologists, the  
6 American academy of pediatrics, the march of dimes, the  
7 national association of public child welfare administrators,  
8 the national council on alcoholism and drug dependence, the  
9 American nurses association, the American public health  
10 association, the American academy of addiction psychiatry,  
11 the national perinatal association and the center for the  
12 future of children; and

13 WHEREAS, threats of arrest and prosecution will deter  
14 many pregnant women from seeking prenatal care and drug and  
15 alcohol treatment; and

16 WHEREAS, the United States has experienced a seven  
17 hundred percent increase in the incarceration of women, with  
18 drug law violations accounting for one-third of the increase;  
19 and

20 WHEREAS, incarceration is not an effective method of  
21 treatment for women struggling with substance abuse;

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
23 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the governor's women's health  
24 council or its successor be requested to create a task force  
25 to develop a comprehensive plan for the state to address the

1 needs of pregnant and postpartum women with substance abuse  
2 problems and the well-being of their children and families;  
3 and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan include guidelines  
5 for a continuum of care for pregnant women with substance  
6 abuse problems, including both prenatal care and substance  
7 abuse treatment and an assessment of current needs and gaps  
8 in services and recommendations to eliminate them; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force identify and  
10 prioritize specific short- and long-term goals and an  
11 implementation time line, identify responsible agencies and  
12 agents for each implementation goal and propose relevant  
13 action steps and performance measurements to evaluate  
14 progress for each goal; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be composed  
16 of experts in the fields of ethics, law, perinatal medicine,  
17 behavioral health treatment and social services;  
18 representatives from the department of health, the  
19 interagency behavioral health care purchasing collaborative,  
20 the drug policy alliance, the women's justice project and at  
21 least one woman who has recovered from perinatal substance  
22 abuse; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force use the  
24 federal center for substance abuse treatment as a vital  
25 resource in the development of treatment guidelines; and

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force provide a  
2 report to the appropriate interim health committee by  
3 November 1, 2009 and present a comprehensive plan for  
4 improving access to substance abuse treatment services and  
5 prenatal care for pregnant women in New Mexico to the  
6 appropriate interim health committee by November 1, 2010; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
8 transmitted to the director of the governor's women's health  
9 council, the secretary of health, the interagency behavioral  
10 health care purchasing collaborative, the drug policy alliance  
11 and the women's justice project. \_\_\_\_\_

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