

**MINUTES
of the
SIXTH MEETING
of the
LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**September 23-25, 2024
Western New Mexico University
J. Cloyd Miller Library
1000 West College Avenue
Silver City**

The sixth meeting of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee was called to order by Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino, chair, on Monday, September 23, 2024, at 9:22 a.m. at Western New Mexico University (WNMU) in Silver City.

Present

Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino, Chair
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson, Vice Chair
Rep. Eleanor Chávez
Rep. Pamelya Herndon
Rep. Jenifer Jones (9/23, 9/24)
Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez

Absent

Sen. David M. Gallegos
Sen. Martin Hickey

Advisory Members

Rep. John Block
Rep. Gail Chasey
Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary
Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill (9/23, 9/25)
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto (9/24)
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Rep. Harlan Vincent

Rep. Kathleen Cates
Sen. Katy M. Duhigg
Rep. Miguel P. García
Rep. Tara Jaramillo
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson
Sen. Linda M. López
Rep. Stefani Lord
Rep. Tara L. Lujan
Rep. Alan T. Martinez
Rep. Cristina Parajón
Sen. Harold Pope
Sen. Gregg Schmedes
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics
Rep. Reena Szczepanski
Sen. Bill Tallman

Guest Legislator

Rep. Luis M. Terrazas (9/23, 9/24)

(Attendance dates are noted for those members not present for the entire meeting.)

Staff

Zander Dawson, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Grace Balderamos, Staff, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

References to Webcast

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at www.nmlegis.gov, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Monday, September 23**Welcome and Introductions (9:22 a.m.)**

Senator Ortiz y Pino welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members introduced themselves.

Hospital Finance Report (9:33 a.m.)

Allegra Hernandez, Ph.D., senior fiscal analyst, Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), presented a report about public funding of New Mexico hospitals. Although the state legislature has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in hospitals in recent years, most allocated funds have not been encumbered, expended or budgeted. Dr. Hernandez explained the implications of the Health Care Delivery and Access Act (HCDAA) and noted that the number of hospitals owned by private equity firms is increasing, which could decrease the long-term viability of New Mexico hospitals. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=1>.

State Budget Report: Revenue Outlook (10:20 a.m.)

Jennifer Faubion, economist, LFC, presented the consensus revenue estimate of the General Fund as of August 2024 that was conducted by the Consensus Revenue Estimating Group, which comprises the LFC, Department of Finance and Administration, Taxation and Revenue Department and Department of Transportation. The LFC report about the consensus revenue estimate included a financial summary of the General Fund that outlined the state's financial health and quantified the state's revenues, reserves and spending. Ms. Faubion

explained the economic and revenue forecasts detailed in the LFC report. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=2>.

Approval of Minutes (11:40 a.m.)

Upon a motion made and without any objections, the committee approved the minutes of the August 26-28, 2024 meeting.

Public Comment (11:40 a.m.)

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

Expanding the Rural Health Care Workforce (1:09 p.m.)

Kimberly Petrovic, Ph.D., M.S.N., M.A., R.N., associate dean, School of Nursing and Kinesiology, WNMU, and Victor Stephen Gonzales, Jr., M.S.N., R.N., healthcare workforce programs director, WNMU, described measures taken by WNMU to broaden southwestern New Mexico's health care workforce, such as recruiting local high school students to participate in WNMU health care programs and offering workforce development training to students to become certified nursing assistants, phlebotomy technicians and pharmacy technicians. The WNMU School of Nursing and Kinesiology hopes to establish an institute of health and human performance in the near future. They noted that WNMU-Deming now houses its health programs in the newly built John Arthur and Janette Smith Educational Center. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=3>.

New Mexico Primary Care Training Consortium (NMPCTC) (2:25 p.m.)

Mary Alice Scott, Ph.D., executive director, NMPCTC; Dan Otero, D.B.A., chief executive officer (CEO), Hidalgo Medical Services (HMS); Robert Whitaker, CEO, Gila Regional Medical Center; and John Andazola, M.D., secretary, Board of Directors, NMPCTC, discussed graduate medical education funding gaps in rural, medically underserved parts of New Mexico, resident physician retention and the national and statewide shortage of primary care physicians. They recommended the creation of a permanent state fund for critical access hospitals, federally qualified health centers and independent psychiatric facilities. They provided information about residency programs in New Mexico and compared rural residency programs in New Mexico to other rural residency programs in the country. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=4>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 4:14 p.m.

Tuesday, September 24

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:07 a.m.

Welcome to WNMU (9:08 a.m.)

Joseph Shepard, Ph.D., M.B.A., president, WNMU, welcomed the committee to WNMU and thanked the committee for meeting in Silver City. He described the challenges of recruiting medical professionals to Silver City and summarized WNMU's health care programs.

Silver City Health Care Providers (9:20 a.m.)

Dr. Otero and Teresa Arizaga, M.D., chief behavioral health officer, HMS, provided information about the medical and behavioral health and crisis intervention services offered by HMS, which serves Grant County and Hidalgo County. Dr. Otero emphasized that patients are never denied medical treatment if they are unable to pay. Mr. Whitaker discussed challenges faced by Gila Medical Services, a county-owned critical access hospital in Silver City. Mike McMillan, chief operations officer, Southwest Bone and Joint Institute, provided an overview of the Southwest Bone and Joint Institute and the Gila Multi-Specialty Independent Practice Association. Donald Stinar, M.D., described his personal experience as a private practitioner in Silver City. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=6>.

Supporting Caregivers and Direct Support Workers (10:59 a.m.)

Meggin Lorino, M.S.W., executive director, New Mexico Association for Home and Hospice Care, provided an overview of personal care, home health care and hospice services offered by the New Mexico Association for Home and Hospice Care. She compared caregiver and direct support worker rates and wages in New Mexico to those in other states. Adrienne R. Smith, president and CEO, New Mexico Caregivers Coalition, provided information about the New Mexico Caregivers Coalition and discussed federal and state initiatives to collect data about payment for caregivers and direct support workers. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=7>.

Public Comment (11:58 a.m.)

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

New Mexico Academy of Physician Assistants (1:20 p.m.)

Stephanie Richmond, president, Board of Directors, New Mexico Academy of Physician Assistants, and Isaac Saucedo, chief medical officer, HMS, explained physician assistants' scope of practice in New Mexico and how that scope of practice compares to other states. They described medical liability implications, reviewed current physician assistant supervision and

oversight requirements and expressed support for optimal team practice. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=8>.

New Mexico Hospital Association (NMHA) (2:20 p.m.)

Troy Clark, president and CEO, NMHA; Mr. Whitaker; and Sandra Emanuel, L.C.S.W., CEO, Peak Behavioral Health, discussed hospital finances and the HCDA. Mr. Clark noted that hospitals are an economic driver, as hospitals are the largest employers in most New Mexican communities that have hospitals. They described challenges faced by urban and rural hospitals, such as rural hospitals having difficulty recruiting and retaining health care professionals and urban hospitals having patient volumes beyond the hospitals' capacity. Other difficulties facing hospitals include high inflation for the costs of medications and supplies, unaffordable malpractice insurance and high operation costs. They praised the HCDDA as a help for sustainable Medicaid reimbursement rates. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=9>.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 3:59 p.m.

Wednesday, September 25

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:15 a.m.

Department of Health (DOH) Psilocybin Report (9:17 a.m.)

Lawrence Leeman, M.D., M.P.H., professor, University of New Mexico School of Medicine, and medical director, Milagro Program; Gary J. French, M.D., medical director, Center for Medical Cannabis, DOH; Arya Lamb, director, Policy and Communications Division, DOH; and Miranda Durham, M.D., chief medical officer, DOH, discussed the medical use of psilocybin and psilocybin-assisted therapy. Dr. Leeman and Dr. French compared psilocybin mushrooms and synthetic psilocybin, addressed safety concerns, explained therapeutic models and discussed current research. They reviewed the legal landscape, equity and ethics, costs, funding and program considerations of medical psilocybin use. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=10>.

Health Care Authority (HCA) Social Safety-Net Programs (10:44 a.m.)

Kyra Ochoa, deputy secretary, HCA, and Niki Kozlowski, director, Income Support Division (ISD), HCA, provided an update on the ISD. They described the ISD's efforts to reduce the backlogs of Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications and recertifications. SNAP has become more accessible to New Mexicans because more people are eligible to participate in SNAP, and the minimum monthly SNAP benefits for elderly and disabled people have increased. Ms. Ochoa and Ms. Kozlowski stated that the HCA has partnered with six community action agencies to help to provide services such as housing assistance and crisis and emergency services to poor and rural areas throughout the state. The community action agencies are funded by the Community Services Block Grant, which provides federal funding to help administer support services to poor and rural communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/23/2024&ItemNumber=11>.

Public Comment (12:13 p.m.)

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

Brainstorming Session (12:39 p.m.)

Senator Ortiz y Pino led the committee in a brainstorming session focused on potential legislation that could address the issues presented to the committee.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m.