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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 41
47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006

INTRODUCED BY
Rick Miera

A JOINT MEMORIAL
REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO HEALTH POLICY COMMISSION TO STUDY THE
IMPORTANCE OF AND THE BARRIERS TO MEETING THE NEED FOR
RECRUITING AND RETAINING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF BILINGUAL
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, the availability of bilingual behavioral health
professionals in New Mexico, especially in rural areas, is
severely limited; and

WHEREAS, an adequate number of bilingual behavioral health
professionals is a critical determinant to meeting the
behavioral health needs of the diverse population of New Mexico
and to prevent or reduce the impact of substance abuse and
mental illness in New Mexico communities; and

WHEREAS, in the next half-century, the United States is
expected to see a significant rise in its Hispanic and other

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1 ethnic cultures and populations; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico is already a very culturally diverse
3 state with significant Hispanic, Native American and Asian
4 populations; and

5 WHEREAS, New Mexico schools, hospitals and other mental
6 health care providers are facing serious shortages of bilingual
7 health care professionals; and

8 WHEREAS, there are many barriers to effective recruitment
9 and retention of bilingual behavioral health professionals,
10 including complex licensing and credentialing requirements,
11 lack of training in the provision of culturally competent care
12 and shortages of trained and experienced bilingual or
13 multilingual professionals; and

14 WHEREAS, no adequate system currently exists to collect
15 data to track the effect of bilingual behavioral health
16 professional shortages on the mental health of New Mexicans;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, data regarding health disparities resulting from
19 a shortage of bilingual behavioral health professionals is
20 similarly lacking; and

21 WHEREAS, increased bilingual behavioral health
22 professional recruitment and retention could result in reduced
23 errors, increased patient safety and outcomes and improved job
24 satisfaction for behavioral health professionals;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico health policy
2 commission be requested to conduct a study of the importance of
3 and the barriers to meeting the need for recruiting and
4 retaining an adequate supply of bilingual behavioral health
5 professionals in New Mexico; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study address the impact
7 of a shortage of bilingual health care professionals on the
8 mental health of New Mexico residents; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting this study, the
10 New Mexico health policy commission confer with the human
11 services department, the department of health, statewide
12 associations representing hospitals and health systems,
13 statewide organizations representing behavioral health
14 professionals and consumers and others with knowledge and
15 expertise in the field of behavioral health; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico health policy
17 commission submit a report of the study, including findings and
18 recommendations, to the interim legislative health and human
19 services committee by November 2006; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
21 transmitted to the New Mexico health policy commission.