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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/22/07

SPONSOR Martinez, R. LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Amber Alerts for Persons with Alzheimer's SB 1189

ANALYST Peery-Galon

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Department of Public Safety (DPS)  
Aging and Long Term Services Department (ALTSD)

#### No Responses Received From

Public Regulations Commission  
New Mexico Municipal League  
New Mexico Association of Counties

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 1189 amends Section 29-15A-2 NMSA 1978 to include individuals with Alzheimer's to the procedures for Amber Alerts.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, degenerative disease that attacks the brain and results in impaired memory, thinking and behavior. ALTSD states there are numerous concerns for the safety of individuals with Alzheimer's disease including evidence of a dramatic increase in the number of wanderers, or older individuals with Alzheimer who voluntarily walk away from their home or caregiver(s). In New Mexico, 35,000 individuals are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia. ALTSD reports New Mexico's rural geography and extreme climate pose serious danger to those who wander.

The Alzheimer's Association has developed a Project Lifesaver in New Mexico. Project Lifesaver is implemented through law enforcement agencies to provide electronic monitoring of individuals with Alzheimer's disease or a related form of dementia whose wandering behavior may place them at-risk. Individuals who are part of the Project Lifesaver Program wear a personalized bracelet that emits a tracking signal. When a caregiver notifies the local law enforcement agency that their loved one is missing, a search and rescue team responds and begins searching with a mobile locator tracking system. Officers must receive training in communication with the person who has Alzheimer's disease or dementia. ALTSD states it is vital that responders understand the disease process and how to best put the individual with dementia at ease so they may be returned home.

### **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

The proposed legislation has a relationship to Senate Bill 912, which creates the Endangered Person's Advisory. In Senate Bill 912, endangered persons are defined as a missing person who is in imminent danger of 1) causing harm to the person's self; 2) causing harm to another; or 3) being harmed by another or who has been harmed by another. ALTSD notes individuals with Alzheimer's and other related dementias would be included under the definition for endangered persons in Senate Bill 912.

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

Amber Alerts were created to help with immediate public notification for criminally abducted children. DPS reports other groups have intentionally not been added to keep the number of Amber Alerts to a minimum. DPS states if you add one group, then another group will want to be added and the alerts will become common and less effective. DPS notes the importance of finding those with Alzheimer's disease or any missing person. However, DPS states its intent regarding the analysis of the proposed legislation is to stress the importance of elevating awareness and immediacy of action by law enforcement in child abduction investigations.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

DPS suggests an alternative would be to establish local, smaller scale alerts for those missing that have Alzheimer's disease.

### **AMENDMENTS**

ALTSD states the proposed legislation is restrictive in that it relates to the individuals, other than children, who would be identified as having Alzheimer's disease. ALTSD notes Alzheimer's disease is difficult to diagnose. ALTSD states the language in the proposed legislation does not include "or related disorders" nor does it allow for alerts for missing persons whose disappearance is considered "foul play."

RPG/mt