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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Muñoz ORIGINAL DATE 2/3/16
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____
SHORT TITLE Native American Suicide Prevention SB 250
ANALYST Chilton

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY16	FY17		
	\$150.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

SB 250 appropriates \$150,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for the purpose of funding a clearinghouse and technical assistance program and to provide culturally appropriate preventive, and interventive services, as well as post-suicide assistance to Native American individuals, families, and communities.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$150 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2017 shall revert to the General Fund.

HED indicates that FY16 included an appropriation for the same initiative in the amount of \$99,700.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Both IAD and HED note the high incidence of suicide among Native Americans, at about double the rate of the nation as a whole (34 per 100,000 for Native Americans as opposed to 16.9 per 100,000 for all Americans), noting as well the suggestion that suicide rates among Native Americans may be significantly underestimated, even at that level. Suicide rates are high among all ages among Native Americans. IAD cites the New Mexico Indicator-Based Information System as stating that New Mexico’s suicide rate in 2014 was “the highest it has been in two decades and 59% higher than the national age-adjusted rate.”

Madelyn S. Gould, Ph.D., MPH notes that” Evidence has accumulated to support the idea that suicidal behavior is “contagious” in that it can be transmitted, directly or indirectly, from one person to another”, with “copy-cat suicide” having occurred on several occasions among Native Americans, especially of high school age.

Gould states that “While the complex etiology of suicidal behavior is recognized ([Gould et al., 2003](#)), it has become increasingly apparent that suicide contagion exists and contributes to suicide risk along with psychopathology, biological vulnerability, family characteristics, and stressful life events. Strategies to prevent suicide contagion are essential and require ongoing evaluation.” SB 250 would aim to prevent this “contagion.”

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) includes in its paper on Native American suicide a paragraph about the risk of contagion: “Many suicide deaths occur on reservations where AI/AN youth have considerable exposure to suicide. Suicide contagion has been observed among both AI/AN adults and youth, and there is evidence that youth may be at particular risk.”

(<http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/sites/default/files/resources/suicide-ethnic-populations.pdf>, and attached)

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

This program is administered by the Board of Regents of UNM.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

UNM would need to seek funding elsewhere to be able to continue providing these services.

LAC/al