

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO CONVENE A  
3 PHYSICAL THERAPY WORKFORCE INCENTIVES STUDY GROUP TO  
4 INVESTIGATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH NEW MEXICO'S WORKFORCE  
5 INCENTIVES, INCLUDING HEALTH PROFESSIONAL LOAN REPAYMENT  
6 ASSISTANCE, ARE PROVIDING ADEQUATE INCENTIVES TO PHYSICAL  
7 THERAPISTS AND PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS TO LOCATE OR  
8 REMAIN IN THE STATE.

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10 WHEREAS, physical therapists and physical therapist  
11 assistants are an essential part of the health care system,  
12 providing care that restores patients to full functioning for  
13 greater, fuller participation in life activities; and

14 WHEREAS, physical therapists and physical therapist  
15 assistants may be found in clinical settings, in  
16 rehabilitation centers and in patients' homes, in each  
17 setting playing an essential role in rehabilitation; and

18 WHEREAS, according to the aging and long-term services  
19 department, from 2000 to 2030, New Mexico's population aged  
20 sixty years and older is projected to increase seventy  
21 percent; and

22 WHEREAS, by 2030, New Mexico will rank third in the  
23 nation in percentage of population aged sixty years and  
24 older; and

25 WHEREAS, as the population of New Mexicans ages, the

1 demand for physical therapy services to maintain and restore  
2 full functioning will be even greater; and

3 WHEREAS, New Mexico has the sixth-lowest rate among the  
4 states of licensed physical therapists, with approximately  
5 sixty-nine per one hundred thousand New Mexicans, while the  
6 national average is approximately eighty-seven physical  
7 therapists per one hundred thousand people; and

8 WHEREAS, despite the value of physical therapy services,  
9 physical therapists' and physical therapist assistants'  
10 earning potential is quite low in proportion to the debts  
11 they incur for their physical therapy education; and

12 WHEREAS, compared to other health care practitioners,  
13 physical therapists have the largest student debt compared to  
14 their earning potential; and

15 WHEREAS, becoming a physical therapist entails seven  
16 years of study, including earning a bachelor's degree and  
17 doctor of physical therapy degree; and

18 WHEREAS, according to a recent survey of New Mexico  
19 physical therapists, a recent graduate of a physical therapy  
20 educational program has incurred a debt, combining student  
21 debt with other forms of debt such as credit cards and other  
22 loans, that may be as much as two hundred ninety-seven  
23 thousand dollars (\$297,000); and

24 WHEREAS, a recent survey of New Mexico physical  
25 therapist assistants reports that the average physical

1 therapist assistant graduates with approximately seventeen  
2 thousand dollars (\$17,000) in student debt; and

3 WHEREAS, the legislature created the rural health care  
4 practitioner tax credit to provide an incentive to health  
5 care providers to offer their badly needed services in rural,  
6 underserved areas of the state; and

7 WHEREAS, the rural health care practitioner tax credit  
8 is not available to physical therapists or physical therapist  
9 assistants, thus depriving physical therapists and physical  
10 therapist assistants of this tax relief and worsening the  
11 lack of physical therapy services in rural, underserved areas  
12 of the state; and

13 WHEREAS, health care workforce incentives programs such  
14 as the New Mexico health service corps and national health  
15 service corps, which may provide scholarships or loan-for-  
16 service assistance to health professionals who make service  
17 commitments, are not available to physical therapists or  
18 physical therapist assistants; and

19 WHEREAS, the New Mexico health professional loan  
20 repayment program, created in 1995 to benefit designated  
21 health professional shortage areas by creating incentives for  
22 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and other  
23 health professionals to serve in these communities, does not  
24 adequately offset the high debt loads that physical therapy  
25 providers have when they graduate from accredited physical

1 therapy programs and begin practicing;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary  
4 of higher education be requested to convene a physical  
5 therapy workforce incentives study group to investigate the  
6 extent to which New Mexico's workforce incentives, including  
7 health professional loan repayment assistance, are providing  
8 adequate incentives to physical therapists and physical  
9 therapist assistants to locate or remain in the state; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of higher  
11 education invite to join the physical therapy workforce  
12 incentives study group representatives from the physical  
13 therapy board, the New Mexico chapter of the American  
14 physical therapy association, the department of health's  
15 office of primary care and rural health and others with  
16 expertise in workforce development, public finance and health  
17 care delivery; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the physical therapy  
19 workforce incentives study group be requested to report its  
20 findings and recommendations to the legislative health and  
21 human services committee and to the legislative finance  
22 committee by October 1, 2018; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
24 transmitted to the chair and vice chair of the legislative  
25 health and human services committee, the chair and vice chair

1 of the legislative finance committee, the secretary of higher  
2 education, the secretary of health, the chair of the physical  
3 therapy board and the president of the board of directors of  
4 the New Mexico chapter of the American physical therapy  
5 association.

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