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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 2

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2018

INTRODUCED BY

Joanne J. Ferrary and Mary Kay Papen

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE BE REQUESTED TO CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PUBLICLY FUNDED INPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

WHEREAS, the southern half of New Mexico is a region consisting of over sixty thousand square miles, making it larger by area than nearly one-half of the states of the United States; and

WHEREAS, twelve counties of southern New Mexico have a combined population of over six hundred thousand people that is projected to grow to six hundred thirty-five thousand people by 2020; and

WHEREAS, a southern New Mexico mental health hospital study task force made up of experts in behavioral health care,

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1 hospital infrastructure and policymaking at the state and
2 county levels met during 2015 and 2016 to study the feasibility
3 of establishing a hospital in southern New Mexico to provide
4 inpatient mental health care to patients who are "committed"
5 pursuant to court order as well as to serve the need for
6 publicly funded inpatient mental health care generally in
7 southern New Mexico; and

8 WHEREAS, the southern New Mexico mental health hospital
9 study task force, which released its report in 2016, found that
10 twelve counties of southern New Mexico have among the highest
11 statewide rates for depression and other mental health
12 conditions; and

13 WHEREAS, in the over sixty thousand square-mile area of
14 southern New Mexico, there is not a single psychiatric hospital
15 to serve the individuals who are involuntarily "committed" by
16 the courts for inpatient care; and

17 WHEREAS, currently, anyone from southern New Mexico who is
18 involuntarily "committed" for inpatient mental health care must
19 be transported all the way to the behavioral health institute
20 at Las Vegas, New Mexico, which for a resident of Las Cruces
21 entails a five-hour drive of over three hundred miles and for a
22 resident of Lordsburg entails a six-hour drive of over four
23 hundred miles; and

24 WHEREAS, the southern New Mexico mental health hospital
25 study task force found that there is a need for patients and

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1 their families in southern New Mexico to have timely access to
2 services within southern New Mexico; and

3 WHEREAS, the task force also found that transporting
4 patients from southern New Mexico via ambulance or, in the case
5 of court-ordered mental health services, via police transport,
6 to the behavioral health institute at Las Vegas is very costly;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, two previous studies, one conducted in 2007 and
9 another conducted in 2012, recommended that access to
10 behavioral health services be increased in southern New Mexico,
11 including a recommendation that the state fund eighteen adult
12 mental health beds there; and

13 WHEREAS, the southern New Mexico mental health hospital
14 study task force recommended that a partnership with an
15 existing inpatient behavioral health facility in southern New
16 Mexico be explored as a first step in providing access in
17 southern New Mexico to publicly funded inpatient mental health
18 care for patients who are "committed" pursuant to court order
19 as well as to greater serve the need for publicly funded
20 inpatient mental health care; and

21 WHEREAS, the task force also recommended that, as a
22 longer-term goal, the feasibility be explored of building a new
23 facility to serve the need for publicly funded inpatient mental
24 health care, including inpatient care for patients who are
25 "committed" pursuant to court order; and

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1 WHEREAS, the task force recommended that the new inpatient
2 mental health facility be built in Dona Ana county to serve as
3 a hub for the further development of a comprehensive system of
4 mental health care for the residents of southern New Mexico;

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative finance committee be
7 requested to investigate the feasibility of establishing
8 publicly funded inpatient mental health services in Dona Ana
9 county, both in the short term via partnership with an existing
10 inpatient mental health facility and in the long term by
11 building a new inpatient mental health facility; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative finance
13 committee be requested to create a comprehensive implementation
14 plan relating to the establishment of new publicly funded
15 inpatient mental health services to identify key tasks and
16 responsibilities, realistic milestones, funding requirements
17 and sources and strategies for engaging key stakeholders at the
18 local, regional and statewide levels; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that staff of the legislative
20 finance committee report the comprehensive implementation plan
21 to the legislative finance committee and the legislative health
22 and human services committee by November 1, 2018; and

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

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1 of the legislative health and human services committee.

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