

May 21, 1999

SENATE EXECUTIVE MESSAGE NO. 11

The Honorable Manny M. Aragon and

Members of the Senate

Executive-Legislative Building

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503

Honorable President and Members of the Senate:

I have this day VETOED and am returning SENATE BILL 26, enacted by the Forty-Fourth Legislature, First Special Session, 1999.

A version of this legislation was vetoed during the regular legislative session. I believe that my earlier message is applicable to this bill as well:

Specifically, this legislation provides employers the option of excluding mental health services from their plan. It is my belief that there exists, among employers, a sense that parity will result in an increase of insurance costs to unmanageable levels. In this environment and with the provision that companies can opt out of any coverage altogether, it is my belief that many companies will opt out of providing mental health coverage resulting in fewer individuals covered for mental health services.

While I believe the concept of mental health parity coverage is good, this bill presents a problem that could result in less mental health services delivered, the exact opposite effect the proponents desired with this legislation.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Johnson

Governor