

**MINUTES  
of the  
FIFTH MEETING  
of the  
LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**September 18-20, 2023  
Ruidoso Convention Center  
111 Sierra Blanca Drive  
Ruidoso**

The fifth meeting of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee (LHHS) was called to order by Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino, chair, on Monday, September 18, 2023, at 9:18 a.m. at the Ruidoso Convention Center in Ruidoso.

**Present**

Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino, Chair  
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson, Vice Chair  
Rep. Eleanor Chávez (9/18, 9/19)  
Rep. Pamela Herndon  
Sen. Martin Hickey  
Rep. Jenifer Jones (9/19)

**Absent**

Sen. David M. Gallegos  
Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez

**Advisory Members**

Rep. John Block  
Rep. Kathleen Cates  
Rep. Joanne J. Ferrary  
Sen. Linda M. Lopez (9/18)  
Rep. Stefani Lord (9/18, 9/19)  
Rep. Tara L. Lujan (9/19)  
Rep. Alan T. Martinez (9/18, 9/19)  
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto  
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez (9/18, 9/19)  
Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics (9/19, 9/20)  
Rep. Harlan Vincent

Rep. Gail Chasey  
Sen. Katy M. Duhigg  
Rep. Miguel P. García  
Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill  
Rep. Tara Jaramillo  
Rep. D. Wonda Johnson  
Sen. Harold Pope  
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero  
Sen. Gregg Schmedes  
Rep. Reena Szczepanski  
Sen. Bill Tallman

**Guest Legislator**

Rep. Micaela Lara Cadena (9/20)

(Attendance dates are noted for those members not present for the entire meeting.)

**Staff**

Zander Dawson, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)  
Grace Balderamos, Staff, LCS  
Paul Estok, Bill Drafter, LCS

## **Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

## **Handouts**

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

## **References to Webcast**

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at [www.nmlegis.gov](http://www.nmlegis.gov), under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

## **Monday, September 18**

### **Welcome and Introductions (9:12 a.m.)**

Senator Ortiz y Pino welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members of the committee and staff introduced themselves.

### **LHHS Study Update (9:18 a.m.)**

Karen Wells, project coordinator, LCS, provided an update on the status of two studies being conducted at the LHHS's request. One of the studies is examining the feasibility of implementing a global budgeting system for rural hospitals, and the other study is focused on identifying and analyzing solutions for reducing administrative costs in the health care system.

### **Child Welfare Analysis with Focus on Social Work Workforce (9:42 a.m.)**

Alvin L. Sallee, A.C.S.W., L.I.S.W., chair, Social Work Task Force and professor emeritus, New Mexico State University, and Melissa Moyer, D.S.W., L.C.S.W., director of social work, Eastern New Mexico University, discussed how the legislature can support New Mexico's social work workforce to improve child welfare in the state. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20091823%20Item%202%20Child%20Welfare%20and%20Social%20Work.pdf>.

### **Welcome to Ruidoso (10:47 a.m.)**

Lynn D. Crawford, mayor, Village of Ruidoso, welcomed the committee to Ruidoso.

### **Federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA) Roundtable Update (11:43 a.m.)**

Senator Ortiz y Pino provided a report on the plans for implementing CARA in New Mexico. He described the Children, Youth and Families Department's role in beginning and running New Mexico's CARA program. He answered questions from committee members about CARA and the CARA program.

**Public Comment (12:20 p.m.)**

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

**100% Chaves County Initiative (1:05 p.m.)**

Dan Jennings, executive director, HagermanForward, Inc., and leadership team member, 100% Chaves County Initiative, presented about the 100% Chaves County Initiative, including its outreach events, partners, vision and challenges. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20091823%20Item%203%20100%20Percent%20Chaves.pdf>.

**Office of the Attorney General (1:53 p.m.)**

Julie Meade, tobacco bureau chief and assistant attorney general, Office of the Attorney General, provided an update about funds from tobacco settlements. James Grayson, chief deputy attorney general, Office of the Attorney General, updated the committee about funds from opioid settlements.

**Brainstorming Session (3:26 p.m.)**

Senator Ortiz y Pino led the committee in a brainstorming session focused on potential legislation that could address the issues presented to the committee.

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 4:23 p.m.

**Tuesday, September 19****Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 9:07 a.m.

**New Mexico Hospital Association (NMHA) (9:10 a.m.)**

Troy Clarke, president and chief executive officer (CEO), NMHA; Todd Oberheu, facility administrator, Lincoln County Medical Center; Sabrina Martin, M.P.T., CEO, Advanced Care Hospital of Southern New Mexico; and Chris Schroeder, chief operating officer and lead designer, Real Time Solutions, provided a presentation about hospital system challenges that New Mexico faces. They discussed rural hospitals' difficulties with sustaining access to health care, New Mexico's shortage of health care workers and the state's lack of primary and specialized health care services and difficulty recruiting and retaining physicians. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20091823%20Item%207%20NMHA.pdf>.

**Providing Behavioral Health Care in Southern New Mexico (11:12 a.m.)**

Philip Huston, executive director, Carlsbad Lifehouse, presented about Carlsbad Lifehouse's background, services and programs. He discussed the behavioral health care climate in southern New Mexico, including treatment options, understaffing and challenges that are unique to the area.

**Meals on Wheels (1:00 p.m.)**

Shauna Frost, M.B.A., CEO, Meals on Wheels New Mexico, and Renee Ruybal, chief advancement officer, Meals on Wheels New Mexico, explained how Meals on Wheels New Mexico combats malnutrition of and loneliness for elderly people. They described future initiatives and expansion plans. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20091823%20Item%209%20Meals%20on%20Wheels.pdf>.

**Alzheimer's Association Update (2:07 p.m.)**

Tommy Hernandez, public policy director, Alzheimer's Association, New Mexico Chapter, and Tim Sheahan, executive director, Alzheimer's Association, New Mexico Chapter, shared Alzheimer's disease statistics in New Mexico and throughout the country and recommended the creation of a dementia care specialist program in New Mexico. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=LHHS&Date=9/18/2023&ItemNumber=10>.

**New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils (NMAHC) (3:02 p.m.)**

Valeria Alarcón, executive director, NMAHC, and Rebekah West, coordinator, Climate Change Health Impacts and Community Action Program, NMAHC, explained how local and statewide health councils advance health equity and public health in New Mexico. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20091823%20Item%2011%20NMAHC.pdf>.

**Approval of Minutes (3:55 p.m.)**

Upon a motion made and duly seconded, and without any objections, the committee approved the minutes of the August 28-30, 2023 meeting.

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 3:56 p.m.

**Wednesday, September 20****Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 9:15 a.m.

**Brainstorming Session (9:15 a.m.)**

Senator Ortiz y Pino led the committee in a brainstorming session focused on potential legislation that could address the issues presented to the committee.

**Chaves County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) (10:26 a.m.)**

Yasine Armstrong, chief development officer, Chaves County CASA, discussed Chaves County CASA's work with children who are survivors of abuse and neglect. She detailed the support and services that Chaves County CASA provides for the social workers, police and other employees who work with those children.

**Public Comment (10:53 a.m.)**

A list of individuals making public comment is available in the meeting file.

**Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) Progress Report: Addressing Substance Use Disorders (10:58 a.m.)**

Rachel Mercer Garcia, program evaluator, LFC, provided a program evaluation report about substance use disorders in the state, including pertinent data and potential next steps that state agencies could consider to strengthen and expand substance use disorders programs. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20091823%20Item%2013%20LFC%20Substance%20Use%20Report.pdf>.

**LFC Program Evaluation: Home Visiting Implementation and Expansion (12:11 p.m.)**

Sarah Dinces, Ph.D., program evaluator, LFC, provided a program evaluation report about the implementation and expansion of the Early Childhood Education and Care Department's home visiting program and explained the findings and recommendations detailed in the report. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LHHS%20091823%20Item%2014%20LFC%20Homevisiting%20Report.pdf>.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.