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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Beam DATE TYPED 2/12/04 HB HJM 77

SHORT TITLE Care of Children Found in Meth Labs SB _____

ANALYST Wilson

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY04	FY05	FY04	FY05		
			See Narrative		

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Joint Memorial 77 requests the children's cabinet to immediately assemble a working task force of all the appropriate agencies to develop and oversee implementation of a "best practices" coordinated multidisciplinary approach to safeguard children found in a methamphetamine production environment or believed to be exposed to methamphetamine ingredients.

Participants should include the Department of Public Safety, the Children, Youth and Families Department, the Department of Health, pediatricians, children's mental health professionals, shelter care agencies, including domestic violence and homeless shelters, relevant social service providers, foster parents, child advocates and representatives of law enforcement agencies.

The task force must produce and implement a detailed coordinated protocol for determining the immediate physical and mental health status needs of such children.

Recommendations must include an analysis of the specific number of children exposed and report the extent of the health hazards and effects on all persons who may be exposed to or living in the immediate residential environment of the methamphetamine manufacturing process.

The task force must develop, and the responsible agencies must identify, community housing alternatives and follow-up resources for children and their parents, and provide special training for foster parents who may be requested to accept children exposed to the methamphetamine manufacturing process.

A report must be made at the October 2004 meeting of the interim legislative Health and Human Services Committee and the interim Corrections Oversight and Justice Committee. The children's cabinet must also issue a public report.

Significant Issues

- The illegal use and abuse of methamphetamine in New Mexico is a serious concern.
- The materials used in the production of methamphetamine may be seriously harmful to humans, especially to young children. Many people engaged in illegal methamphetamine use and production is parents. New Mexico is committed to protecting its children.
- There is a lack of factual public information of the possible dangers associated with methamphetamine production. It is important to identify and quantify the health hazards to innocent bystanders. The effects of inhaling harmful substances on developing respiratory systems are still unknown.
- The best interest of children, including their physical health and mental health needs, must be of primary importance in immediate response and treatment. Children need the stability of their family and every attempt must be made to keep children safely at home.
- There is a need to identify primary methamphetamine manufacturers while separating unknowing bystanders or innocent victims. Parents must be given the resources to protect their children.
- Today there is no single coordinated statewide protocol among law enforcement, child welfare, community and health responder agencies and other organizations to ensure that an exposed child receive immediate and "best practices" treatment and resources to safeguard that child's health, family and future. The responses to this complex problem must be multidisciplinary, logical and humane.
- New Mexico has a standing children's cabinet dedicated to creating a bright and healthy future for children and families.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no immediate fiscal impact, but the requested task force will most probably identify some financial requirements to respond to the problems discussed in the memorial.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The departmental personnel and experts identified in this memorial should be able to handle the provisions of this memorial with existing staff.

DW/dm