FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR   HCPAC   **DATE TYPED**   2/18/04   **HB**   HM 25/HCPACS

SHORT TITLE   Autistic Registry Feasibility Study   **SB**

ANALYST   Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

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

 Relates to HB 399, appropriates funds to University of New Mexico for diagnostic evaluations of children with autism spectrum disorder.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LFC Files

Responses Received From
Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

   Synopsis of Bill

House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee Substitute for House Memorial 25 requests the Legislative Health & Human Services Committee to study the feasibility of establishing a system for determining the number of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and how to deliver the necessary services to that population and to develop a "one-stop-shop" for autism evaluations.

   Significant Issues

The number of children with autism spectrum disorders being diagnosed in NM and the U.S. is growing exponentially. Many children are being identified and diagnosed at age two and receive early intervention through the Family Infant Toddler Program. Other children are identified during pre-school or kindergarten and receive special education services. It is critical that New Mexico gain knowledge of how many children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders in order to adequately plan and allocate resources. The need for statewide data collection is rec-

ommended by the National Research Council (2001) in its report "Educating Children with Autism"

The UNM Health Sciences operates two statewide programs at the Center for Development and Disability that have expertise at diagnosing and providing specialized intervention with children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Some FTE from the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program would have to be dedicated to this effort. However no additional FTE would be needed.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Nationally the growth in diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has increased an alarming 172%, compared with just 16% for all other disabilities. While there is a lack of data in New Mexico, anecdotal evidence is that the numbers of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders has increased over the past 5 – 10 years. Recent studies have revealed 2 to 6 children per 1,000 children have ASD and given these figures, conservative estimates indicate that there may be approximately 3,600 to 10,800 children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders in New Mexico, with estimated 270 - 810 children under the age of five. Identification of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders typically occurs between the ages of 2 – 4 years old. Due to the specific recommended interventions for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders it is important that they are accurately diagnosed early in order to receive appropriate early intervention or preschool special education services.

The Southwest Autism Network and the Early Childhood Evaluation Program have expertise in working with children with autism here in New Mexico. These programs have highly trained and experienced staff (including: developmental pediatrician, a neuropsychologist and various therapy staff) that are able to conduct diagnostic evaluations of children with autism spectrum disorders. Both programs are located at the University of New Mexico – Health Sciences Center, Center for Development & Disability and serve children across New Mexico. The center operates an autism clinic and also conducts diagnostic evaluations in local communities.

DOH notes that the study is relevant in order to establish the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder in both children and adults in New Mexico. Such information would assist the Department of Health and the Public Education Department in resource planning related to the need for diagnostic evaluations, training and technical assistance across the state in various communities.

The National Research Council (NRC) (2001) "Educating Children with Autism" states that "without comprehensive planning and estimates, it will not be possible to allocate the proper amounts of personnel and fiscal resources. The NRC report recommends that states have an organized data system that can answer questions such as, "How many children with autism are there?" or "How many teachers are needed?" These questions can only be addressed if states have a data system to compile the demographics of the individuals and programs.

BD/lg:yr