

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH FOR THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, the national state-by-state report card on women's health for 2004, which examines and grades thirty-four status indicators of women's health based on overall benchmarks drawn from the health objectives set for the nation by the United States department of health and human services' healthy people 2010 agenda, has graded New Mexico "failing" or "unsatisfactory" in nineteen of the thirty-four indicators; and

WHEREAS, the status indicators measured are in the following four categories: women's access to health care services; addressing wellness and prevention; key health conditions, including key causes of death, chronic health conditions, reproductive health, mental health, and violence against women; and living in a healthy community; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico received failing or unsatisfactory grades in all four of the status indicator categories; and

WHEREAS, the same report card evaluates the performance of state governments in promoting sixty-seven policy indicators on women's health, including statutes, regulations, policies and programs that address the problems identified by the four

categories of health status indicators, and has rated New Mexico as "meets policy" in only twenty-eight of the sixty-seven indicators; and

WHEREAS, a total of nineteen states currently have offices of women's health, including the neighboring states of Texas, Arizona and Colorado; and

WHEREAS, state offices of women's health can serve many different functions, including developing agendas on women's health issues; providing policy guidance to the governor, state legislature and department of health; serving as a clearinghouse and resource for information on women's health for the public; and funding and overseeing direct health care services benefiting women; and

WHEREAS, multiple governmental, nongovernmental and grassroots organizations in the state are engaged in the provision and advocacy of services for women and endeavor to increase coordination of their activities and reduce duplication of effort; and

WHEREAS, women's health services in Santa Fe has been designated and funded since 2001 by the federal department of health and human services office of women's health as a community center of excellence in women's health, one of only fourteen in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the mission of a community center of excellence in women's health is to unite promising approaches in women's

health through the integration of:

- A. comprehensive, gender-specific health service delivery;
- B. training for lay and professional health providers;
- C. community-based research;
- D. public education and outreach;
- E. leadership development for women as health care consumers and providers; and
- F. technical assistance to ensure the replication of promising models and strategies at the community level and to improve health outcomes for underserved women;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the commission on the status of women be requested to create a task force to study the establishment of an office of women's health for New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force review the methods of developing women's health policy and service delivery in an effective and comprehensive fashion to promote health and reduce the burden of preventable disease and injury among the women and girls of New Mexico, including the following focus areas:

- A. development of a comprehensive framework for women's health policy and programs that reflects the current research on the health status of women in New Mexico and is

representative of the needs of women and girls throughout the state;

B. enhancement of policy and resource development by facilitating communication among various state departments and programs, regional local health offices and community organizations, and by providing technical assistance to government agencies and the legislature;

C. support and coordination of the activities of the women's health council that provides policy recommendations to the governor and the secretary of health on women's health issues;

D. facilitation of women's health programs within New Mexico in order to identify duplication or gaps in services and to improve coordination of services to create a seamless delivery system based on key health concerns of women;

E. conveying information on women's health resources and organizations to policymakers and the general public; and

F. providing administrative support for a New Mexico women's health survey for the purpose of collecting, analyzing and disseminating information to guide decision-making about women's health by public health professionals and policymakers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be made up of

HJM 21
Page 4

representatives of the commission on the status of women; the department of health; the New Mexico health policy commission; the children, youth and families department; the human services department; the Indian affairs department; the veterans' services department; other agencies and commissions within New Mexico government, as appropriate; women's health services, inc.; women's health and human services advocacy groups; and other appropriate advocacy groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its findings to the legislative health and human services committee by October 2005; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the governor and the secretaries and directors of the following: the commission on the status of women; the department of health; the New Mexico health policy commission; the children, youth and families department; the human services department; the Indian affairs department; the veterans' services department; the aging and long-term services department; the corrections department; the general services department; and other agencies and commissions within New Mexico government, as appropriate.