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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Varela DATE TYPED 02-17-05 HB 841

SHORT TITLE Post-Secondary Suicide Prevention Programs SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Woods

### APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$917.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to the Appropriation for the Commission on Higher Education in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to SB210, HB263, HB684

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)

New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

New Mexico Health Policy Commission (HPC)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 841 – Making an Appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education for Behavioral Health Programs that Include Suicide and Binge-Drinking Among Post-Secondary Students – appropriates \$917,000 from the general fund to the Commission on Higher Education for expenditure in FYs 06 and 07 to initiate, enhance and supplement behavioral health programs on community college and university campuses to address post-secondary student behavioral health needs, including suicide intervention and binge-drinking prevention education and services. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY07 shall revert to the general fund.

Significant Issues

CHE relates the U.S. Department of Education's strategies for dealing with this issue:

- Promoting alcohol-and other drug-free social, recreational, and extracurricular options and public service
- Creating a social, academic, and residential environment that promotes healthy social norms
- Limiting availability and access
- Limiting marketing and promotion of alcohol
- Enforcing campus policy and state and local laws

DOH further indicates that legislation focusing on suicide prevention and binge drinking would enhance the effect of public health programs aimed at youth (nineteen years of age and younger), reinforce the messages of prevention and timely intervention to the entire community, and provide comprehensive and coordinated prevention programs statewide. DOH suggests that the mental health problems that underlie suicide also underlie homicide and accidents – the two leading killers of New Mexico young people.

DOH adds that suicide and binge-drinking are two of the critical problems facing college students. At any life change, such as leaving home, moving from high school to college, youth are faced with problems with peers, fitting in, and new challenges. College, for many students, gives them a chance to live according to their own rules, without having to answer to their parents about their actions. DOH offers the following observations with respect to incidence as well as etiology.

- National statistics on deaths indicate that suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth aged 15-24 years.<sup>1</sup> The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) cites alcohol use among adolescents as being associated with considering, planning, attempting, and completing suicide. In one study, 37 percent of eighth-grade females who drank heavily reported attempting suicide, compared with 11 percent who did not drink.<sup>2</sup> Heavy drinking among youth has been linked with risky sexual behavior, drug use, and poor academic performance.<sup>3</sup> In New Mexico, more than a third of New Mexico high-school students were binge-drinking, which is categorized by drinking five or more alcoholic drinks in a row.<sup>4</sup>
- A 2001 New Mexico study reported that of the 63 New Mexico youth, age 15-24, who died by suicide, 58 had toxicology tests revealing that 29 – some 50 percent – tested positive for drugs or alcohol, and 18 of those who tested positive were

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Health Statistics Deaths: Final Data for 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Windle, *et al.*, "Alcohol Use, Suicidal Behavior, and Risky Activities Among Adolescents," *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 2(4):317-330, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey Results, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

over the legal limit for intoxication.<sup>5</sup> Another investigation observed that increases in the excise tax on beer are associated with a reduced number of male suicides, and that suicide by males age 20-24 are positively related to the availability of alcohol.<sup>6</sup>

HPC supports DOH's observations citing a report from the National Mental Health Association:

- College students are feeling more overwhelmed and stressed than 15 years ago.
- More than 30 percent of college freshmen report feeling overwhelmed a great deal of the time.
- About 38 percent of college women report feeling frequently overwhelmed.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The appropriation of \$917,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY07 shall revert to the general fund.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

CHE indicates that it would need an additional, unspecified number of FTEs to implement these programs.

DOH notes that it oversees contracts to provide youth, parent, and community suicide education programs in Santa Fe and surrounding areas. Currently, 1.0 FTE is assigned to youth suicide prevention efforts. Additional collaborative efforts with CHE to coordinate youth and post-secondary efforts may necessitate a temporary shift of resources to support statewide implementation of this legislation.

### **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP OR RELATIONSHIP**

Relates to the Appropriation for the Commission on Higher Education in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to SB210 and HB263 in that SB210 and HB263 seek to appropriate \$750,000 from the general fund to the Department of Health to provide suicide prevention resources and support community coordination efforts.

Relates to HB684 in that HB684 seeks to appropriate \$110,000 from the general fund to the Department of Health to gather data on gambling addiction in New Mexico, conduct a study to determine the incidence of suicides and bankruptcies that involve gambling debt or compulsive gambling behavior and report to the legislature on the department's findings.

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

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<sup>5</sup> *New Mexico Child Fatality Review*, Annual Report (2001).

<sup>6</sup> *Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics* 6, 37-46 (2003).

As general background to the issue, HPC offers the following information with respect to suicide and binge drinking in New Mexico:

- According to the Health Policy Commission (HPC) Quick Facts 2005, “New Mexico ties with Nevada for the highest rate of violent deaths (such as suicide and homicide).”
- In 2002, 5.4 percent (2,406) of hospital patient discharges for delivery of mental health services were under the age of 18. (HPC Quick Facts 2004)
- Young people are hospitalized an average of seven days longer than adults for mental diseases and disorders. (Quick Facts 2004)
- An estimated economic and social cost of completed and medically treated suicides in New Mexico was over \$200 million in 1996. (Health Resources and Services Administration)
- According to a New Mexico State University survey, binge drinking was reported for 42 percent of freshmen, 43 percent of sophomores, 46 percent for juniors, and 45 percent in the senior year. The increase can be attributed to students getting older and having more access to alcohol.
- While there have been several alcohol-poisoning induced deaths over the past few years on NM campuses, reports from the schools indicate that most students drink responsibly.

On the national level HPC indicates youth using illicit drugs other than marijuana are more likely to commit suicide than youth who do not use such drugs.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, that 25 percent of college students report academic consequences of their drinking including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower overall grades.<sup>8</sup> HPC indicates that the following data are drawn from the activities of college students between the ages of 18-24:

- 1,400 die annually from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes.
- 500,000 are unintentionally injured while under the influence of alcohol.
- More than 600,000 are assaulted by other students who have been drinking.
- More than 70,000 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.
- 400,000 had unprotected sex, and more than 100,000 report having been too intoxicated to know if they consented to having sex.
- More than 150,000 students develop an alcohol-related health problem and between 1.2 percent and 1.5 percent of students indicate that they tried to commit

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<sup>7</sup> 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse.

<sup>8</sup> [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/facts/](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/facts/)

suicide within the past year due to drinking or drug use.

- About 5 percent of 4-year college students are involved with the police or campus security as a result of their drinking, and an estimated 110,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are arrested for an alcohol-related violation such as public drunkenness or driving under the influence.

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