

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE DANGERS OF MERCURY AMALGAM AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY.

WHEREAS, mercury is a potent neurotoxin that can affect the brain, spinal cord, kidneys and liver; and

WHEREAS, metallic mercury is used to produce chlorine gas and caustic soda and is also used in thermometers, dental fillings and batteries; and

WHEREAS, the mercury in a dental amalgam continually emits mercury vapors; and

WHEREAS, the federal environmental protection agency considers removed amalgam filling and extracted teeth containing amalgam filling to be hazardous waste; and

WHEREAS, mercury toxicity is a retention toxicity that builds up over years of exposure; and

WHEREAS, according to certain scientific studies and the agency for toxic substances and disease registry of the public health service of the federal department of health and human services, children and pregnant women are at particular risk for exposure to mercury contained in dental amalgam; and

WHEREAS, according to the federal centers for disease control and prevention, up to one in ten pregnant women in the United States already carry enough mercury in their bodies to

pose a threat of neurological damage to the fetus; and

WHEREAS, the use of mercury put into the body in any form is opposed by many health groups, such as the American public health association, the California medical association and the health care without harm organization; and

WHEREAS, more than one thousand four hundred health care facilities in the United States have pledged to become mercury free; and

WHEREAS, once mercury enters water it can change to methylmercury, and methylmercury pollution is endangering communities by contaminating fish, an important food source; and

WHEREAS, state laws in Maine and California now require dentists to distribute information on the potential hazards of the use of mercury in any dental procedure;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to conduct a study on the dangers of mercury amalgam and to develop recommendations for public informational materials and environmental safety; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the informational materials address the advantages and disadvantages to oral health, overall health and the environment of using mercury or mercury amalgam in dental procedures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations for

environmental safety consider appropriate and acceptable measures for the disposal of dental waste; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health use the research of national and international experts on mercury toxicity and the experience of other states in regulating mercury use and disposal in conducting the study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and recommendations of the study be presented to the legislative health and human services committee at its October 2006 meeting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of health.