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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 32

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006

INTRODUCED BY

Jim R. Trujillo

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO DISCONTINUE THE PRACTICE OF AUTOCLOSURE IN THE MEDICAID PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the number of medicaid enrollees is routinely reduced by the automatic disenrollment of participants, a practice known as autoclosure; and

WHEREAS, this practice affects predominantly children and pregnant women; and

WHEREAS, autoclosure occurs when a period of certification of medicaid eligibility expires and the information to reenroll the participant has not taken place, thereby activating a computer process that automatically disenrolls the participant; and

WHEREAS, there are many legitimate reasons why the reenrollment process does not occur on a timely basis,

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1 including caseworkers' inability to complete the paperwork due
2 to overly heavy caseloads, participant or caseworker illness,
3 lost reenrollment application information and lack of
4 understanding of the requirements for reenrollment; and

5 WHEREAS, in the past, closure of a medicaid case required
6 an active step of entering information into the computer, but
7 closure is now accomplished automatically, without human
8 involvement; and

9 WHEREAS, thousands of women and children are disenrolled
10 from medicaid every month, and in the last year approximately
11 twenty thousand women and children lost medicaid coverage due
12 to this practice; and

13 WHEREAS, health care providers report that it is difficult
14 to reenroll these women and children by using the process of
15 presumptive eligibility due to burdensome paperwork
16 requirements and the large volume of people affected; and

17 WHEREAS, parents and children who lack medicaid coverage
18 may not seek appropriate medical intervention on a timely
19 basis, due to a fear of not being able to afford the care, and
20 then require more costly and serious care at a later time; and

21 WHEREAS, up to eighty percent of the people whose cases
22 are automatically closed are found to be eligible for medicaid
23 and are reenrolled within six months; and

24 WHEREAS, very few people who are medicaid eligible
25 actually experience a change in economic condition that would

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1 result in legitimate disenrollment from the medicaid program;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
3 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department be
4 requested to discontinue the practice of autoclosure in the
5 medicaid program; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
7 sent to the secretary of human services and the governor.

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