

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: HB 173

48th Legislature, 1st Session, 2007

Short Title: Childhood Obesity Prevention & Treatment

Sponsor(s): Representative Edward C. Sandoval and Others

Analyst: Peter van Moorsel

Date: January 24, 2007

Bill Summary:

HB 173 appropriates funds to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico (UNM) for the Health Sciences Center Pediatric Department's telehealth programs to help rural health providers and school-based health centers (SBHCs) to treat and prevent childhood obesity through telehealth consultation.

Fiscal Impact:

\$150,000 is appropriated from the General Fund for FY 08. HB 173 contains a reversion clause.

Issues:

- The Department of Health analysis of HB 173 reports that the Envision New Mexico Program of the UNM Health Sciences Center has started a telehealth pilot project in two of New Mexico's 68 SBHCs. The appropriation in HB 173 would fund the expansion of this telehealth pilot program to SBHCs in rural communities, which addresses overweight and obesity issues in two ways:
 - to increase the ability of health providers to identify and treat the conditions associated with being overweight; and
 - to train school-based personnel to run lifestyle modification groups to help students lose weight and become more physically fit.
- The New Mexico Health Policy Commission's 2007 *Quick Facts* reports that in 2003, 24 percent of New Mexico high-school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. In 2002, 22 percent of low-income children between two and five years of age in New Mexico were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

Background:

- An Legislative Education Study Committee work group, formed in response to HM 28, passed during the 2004 legislative session, cited the agreement of health authorities that sedentary lifestyles and a dramatic rise in consumption of a high-caloric, high-fat diet cause

increased rates of childhood obesity, which tripled among youth between 1980 and 2000. In New Mexico, for example, the Public Education Department (PED) reports that 24 percent of high school students are overweight or at risk of being overweight. The work group also reported that chronic health problems caused by childhood obesity include type 2 diabetes, orthopedic problems, liver and gallbladder disease, asthma, sleep apnea, and emotional and psychological disorders.

- In 2005, the Legislature considered HB 62a, *Elementary School Physical Education*, to provide physical education in elementary schools. Although the bill did not pass, the Legislature appropriated approximately \$1.5 million for physical education in elementary schools and approximately \$500,000 for obesity programs for expenditure in FY 06.
- In 2005, the LESC endorsed and legislation was amended to restore health education as a required subject in grades 1 to 3 and as an elective in grades 4 to 8 and high school.
- Also in 2005, the Legislature passed SJM 2, *Study Ways to Improve Health of Youth*, which requests the Department of Health and PED to collaborate in a study of methods to increase the physical activity and improve the eating habits of youth and develop strategies that could be implemented administratively. In response to the memorial, these two departments established a Nutrition Rule Committee and a Wellness Policy Committee. The report prepared in response to SJM 2 states that the performance standards developed by PED will be established by rule in January 2006 for implementation in school year 2006-2007.

Related Bills:

HB 25 *Programs for Low-Income Children*
SB 180 *Rural Area Telehealth Programs*