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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/21/2007

SPONSOR Feldman LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE NURSE ADVICE LINE FOR UNINSURED SB 9

ANALYST McOlash

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

| Appropriation | | Recurring or Non-Rec | Fund Affected |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------|
| FY07 | FY08 | | |
| | \$1,000.0 | Recurring | General Fund |
| | | | |

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Higher education Department (HED)
Department of health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 9 appropriates \$1,000,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico (UNM) for expenditures in FY08 to expand the nurse advice line (NA-NM) to cover the costs of calls from uninsured callers who seek advice from registered nurses but whose expenses are not met with funding from any other private or public funders of NA-NM.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1,000,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered funds at the end of FY 2008 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This request was not on the list of priority projects submitted by the University of New Mexico to the Higher Education Department for review and was not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY2008.

DOH Comments

NA-NM is staffed by RNs who provide medical, behavioral, social service and emergency needs as well as health information to callers. Any person in New Mexico, regardless of insurance status, can call the line. Over 28,000 calls were received in the first six months of operation (June-December 2006). NA-NM data indicates 64% of the callers who would have gone to the Emergency Room were redirected.

NA-NM received start-up state funding of \$500,000 in FY07 and is currently financed through contracts with Lovelace Health Plan, Presbyterian Health Plan, Presbyterian Pediatric Medical Group, Bernalillo County and the UNM Health Sciences Center-Coordinated Systems of Care-Community Access Program (CSC-CAP). The yearly budget is \$4.2 million, of which \$3.2 million is covered by current contracts, resulting in an unmet need of \$1 million.

SB9 could assist NA-NM in serving the 100,000 callers expected in 2007. Funding could also allow RN staff to be moved from the Albuquerque site to work from their homes. This could also allow for on-site training of new nurses for eventual placement in rural areas statewide. Nurses could work from their homes in any part of the state. NA-NM spends about eight minutes with each caller, has a full-time staff of 15 and would need additional staff to meet expected increased demand.

New Mexico is the first state in the country to create a web-enabled, statewide health advice line through a public/private partnership. Benefits of a single advice line in NM include: reducing costly emergency room visits; recruitment and retention of rural doctors by providing after-hours relief; emergency preparedness through monitoring geographic clusters of illness, exposures, and concerns; and assignment to a medical home through the “Primary Care Dispatch” program.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

DOH reports that 12% of the callers using the nurse advice line are uninsured. The program has set a goal of substantially increasing this percentage. Services such as the nurse advice line can help the total estimated 21% of New Mexicans who have no health insurance. The nurse advice line strives to be the single point of contact for health advice in the state, integrating services including 911 and emergency room calls.

BM/nt/csd