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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/15/07

SPONSOR Lopez LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Prevention Programs SB 954

ANALYST Geisler

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$350.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: HB 523
Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Department of Health (DOH)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 954 would appropriate \$350,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Health (DOH) for expenditure in Fiscal Year 2008 to support and strengthen a fetal alcohol syndrome prevention program at the University of New Mexico (UNM) that delivers programs in English and Spanish and initiates collaborations statewide.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of three hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000) contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2008 shall revert to the general fund. Funding for the specific purpose outlined in this bill is not part of DOH's FY08 operating budget request. DOH notes that funding for base FAS services is included in both the Executive and Legislative recommendations. State funding to support FAS services is approximately \$80,000 and the total funding to professional services is less than \$310,000. DOH currently contracts with UNM for FAS-related activities

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Provided by DOH:

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a disease of brain malformation of a developing infant caused by use of alcohol by the mother during pregnancy; there are no known “safe” amounts of alcohol during a pregnancy. It is a condition characterized by abnormal facial features, growth retardation, cognitive impairment and central nervous system problems. Each year between 210-350 people are born who will be diagnosed with FAS (http://casaa.unm.edu/PreventFAS/NM_Data.htm). FAS is the only 100% completely preventable birth defect and is the largest preventable cause of mental retardation in the United States.

Use of alcohol just before pregnancy may be a problem because women might not be aware of a pregnancy in the earliest weeks. In 2000-2003 in the three months before pregnancy, an estimated 19% of lower income mothers drank frequently compared to 16% of those not at lower income. In the last 3 months of pregnancy, 4.2% of lower income mothers drank any amount compared to 5.3% of mothers not at lower income. Less than 1% of mothers who drank frequently or binge drank had access to and used a program to quit drinking.
www.health.state.nm.us/phd/prams/home.html

The DOH Office of Disability and Health has funded an FAS prevention project at the UNM Center for Alcohol Substance Abuse and Addictions (CASAA) since 1996. In 2003, the project, in conjunction with the UNM School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, produced a 30-minute FAS awareness and prevention video I Don’t Want My Daughter to Hate Me. The project has distributed more than 10,000 copies of the video in New Mexico and the country and has bought airtime on network and cable channels in New Mexico. Other projects include outreach and teen peer education, statewide, through a school based program for parenting teens (GRADS). The program provides FAS information in county marriage license packets, FAS conferences, videos and other education programs in the schools. The prevention programs are in English and Spanish to reach many audiences.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

SB 954 relates to the Governor’s policy initiative Healthy New Mexico Goal 2: Improve Health Outcomes and Family Support for New Mexicans. DOH suggests performance measures could include the number of public awareness presentations on FAS, the percent of positive response by the public, and the percent of mothers who drink during pregnancy. The expected outcomes, numbers of youth, numbers of participating communities, or changes in behavior (increase or decrease) are not identified.

DUPLICATION

SB 954 relates to HB 523, which provides \$350,000 to CYFD to contract with a nonprofit organization for a fetal alcohol syndrome awareness pilot project. The project shall use the media and associated awareness initiatives in public schools and target health areas throughout the state.

GG/mt