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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**SPONSOR** Foley **ORIGINAL DATE** 01/31/08  
**LAST UPDATED** \_\_\_\_\_ **HB** 539  
**SHORT TITLE** Statewide 24-Hour Nurse Advice Hotline **SB** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ANALYST** Geisler

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$20.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates: HB 2, SB 165  
Relates to: HB 32

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From  
Department of Health (DOH)  
Health Policy Commission (HPC)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 539 proposes to appropriate \$20,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Health (DOH) for expenditure in fiscal year 2009 to help support a statewide twenty-four hour nurse advice hotline. Any unexpended balance remaining at the end of FY09 would revert to the General Fund.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no base funding at DOH for the nurse advice line. The DOH FY09 budget request included \$500 thousand to support the nurse advice line, but no funding was recommended by either the Legislative Finance Committee or executive for this purpose. The latest version of HB 2 contains \$70 thousand and SB 165 contains \$85.6 thousand to support the twenty-four-hour nurse advice line.

A \$500,000 appropriation for infrastructure was received in April 2005. Other start up costs of the line were shared by New Mexico Department of Health, Lovelace Health Plan, Presbyterian Health Plan, Presbyterian Pediatric Medical Group, Gila Regional Medical Center, Hidalgo Medical Services, Sierra Vista Hospital, Union County Hospital, Bernalillo County Commissioners, UNM Health Science Center, UNM Hospitals, Coordinated Systems of Care-Community Access Program-CSC-CAPNM.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

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.

Nurse Advice-New Mexico (NA-NM) is staffed by Registered Nurses (RN) who provides 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). Almost 95,000 calls were received in 2007, with an average of 11,000 calls per month. NA-NM data indicates over 64% of the callers in 2007 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.

The NA-NM cannot absorb the increasing costs of callers who are not covered by the existing contracts. Without increased support, NA-NM may go out of business, leaving New Mexico without a telephone triage system.

HB 539 could assist NA-NM in serving the 100,000 callers expected in 2008. In 2007, 15 nurses were set-up to answer calls from their homes in Bernalillo County and Rio Rancho. Funding could also allow RN staff most familiar with local resources to be situated in other counties such as Valencia, Dona Ana, Chavez, Eddy, and San Juan. This could also allow for more on-site training of new nurses for eventual placement in all rural areas statewide. Nurses could work from their homes in any part of the state. Currently, 48% of calls originate from outside the Albuquerque area. 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.

## **RELATIONSHIP AND DUPLICATION**

HB 539 relates to HB 32, which proposes appropriating \$500,000 for the nurse advice line. The funding proposed by HB 539 is duplicated by HB 2, which contains \$70 thousand for this item and SB 165, which contains \$85.6 thousand.

