

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE  
3 TO STUDY ILLICIT AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AND  
4 ADDICTION AMONG HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND MAKE  
5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEASURES TO ADDRESS PATIENT SAFETY  
6 CONCERNS AND PROVIDER ILLICIT AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND  
7 ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ADDICTION.

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9 WHEREAS, drug and alcohol abuse is a serious problem in  
10 the United States, with over twenty-two million Americans  
11 having a substance dependence or abuse problem, according to  
12 the department of health and human services' substance abuse  
13 and mental health services administration; and

14 WHEREAS, the United States department of health and  
15 human services' substance abuse and mental health services  
16 administration reports that approximately sixteen million  
17 four hundred thousand Americans are illicit drug users; and

18 WHEREAS, the national institute on drug abuse reports  
19 that forty-eight million people have used prescription drugs  
20 for nonmedical reasons in their lifetime, which is  
21 approximately twenty percent of the population of the United  
22 States; and

23 WHEREAS, the journal *Alcohol Health and Research World*  
24 reports that nearly fourteen million Americans meet  
25 diagnostic criteria for alcohol use disorders; and

1           WHEREAS, the United States department of health and  
2 human services' substance abuse and mental health services  
3 administration reports that the vast majority of illicit drug  
4 users, or fifteen million out of sixteen million four hundred  
5 thousand illicit drug users, hold full-time jobs; and

6           WHEREAS, the United States department of health and  
7 human services reports that nearly seventy-five percent of  
8 all adult illicit drug users are employed, as are most binge  
9 and heavy alcohol users; and

10           WHEREAS, the United States department of health and  
11 human services' national institute on drug abuse reports that  
12 employed drug abusers cost their employers about twice as  
13 much in medical and workers' compensation claims as their  
14 drug-free co-workers; and

15           WHEREAS, health care is expected to generate three  
16 million new wage and salary jobs between 2006 and 2016, more  
17 than in any other industry; and

18           WHEREAS, according to the United States bureau of labor  
19 statistics, health care is the largest industry in the  
20 American economy; and

21           WHEREAS, health care workers have a high incidence of  
22 occupational injury and illness and have physically demanding  
23 and mentally stressful jobs; and

24           WHEREAS, the United States department of justice reports  
25 that health care workers are as likely as anyone else to

1 abuse drugs; and

2 WHEREAS, when health care providers are impaired by  
3 illicit or prescription drug or alcohol abuse on the job,  
4 patients may suffer adverse health outcomes due to medical  
5 errors and other results of impaired functioning;

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
7 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be  
8 requested to convene a health care provider illicit and  
9 prescription drug and alcohol abuse task force to study the  
10 problems faced by health care professionals and the cost of  
11 impairment to patients, colleagues and health care costs; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health  
13 meet with representatives from the New Mexico medical board;  
14 the New Mexico medical society; independent practice  
15 associations; the board of nursing; the national union of  
16 hospital and health care employees; the personnel board; and  
17 specialists in identifying and treating illicit and  
18 prescription drug and alcohol abuse and addiction; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the health care provider  
20 illicit and prescription drug and alcohol abuse task force  
21 devise protocols regarding measures to protect patients from  
22 the consequences of impaired functioning in health  
23 professionals who abuse illicit and prescription drugs or  
24 alcohol on the job; the identification of illicit and  
25 prescription drug and alcohol abuse and addiction; offering

1 treatment and drug and alcohol testing to health care  
2 professionals identified as facing abuse or addiction issues;  
3 any disciplinary measures that professional licensing boards  
4 may take to address on-the-job illicit and prescription drug  
5 or alcohol abuse; and any regulatory requirements that  
6 professional licensing boards may implement to ensure  
7 compliance with recommended protocols for drug and alcohol  
8 testing; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the health care provider  
10 illicit and prescription drug and alcohol abuse task force  
11 report its findings to the interim legislative health and  
12 human services committee by October 1, 2010; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the health care provider  
14 illicit and prescription drug and alcohol abuse task force  
15 publish its findings on the department of health's web site  
16 and in a written report for general distribution; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
18 transmitted to the secretary of health; the president of the  
19 New Mexico medical board; the president of the New Mexico  
20 medical society; the secretary of the board of nursing; and  
21 the president of the national union of hospital and health  
22 care employees.

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