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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/29/09

SPONSOR Campos LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Expand Rehab Teaching Programs SB 106

ANALYST Earnest

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$150.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Commission for the Blind
Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 106 appropriates \$150 thousand from the general fund to the Commission for the Blind to expand rehabilitation training programs.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$150 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2010 shall revert to the general fund.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

It isn't clear how many more blind persons would be served by this appropriation, but the Commission for the Blind states "the funding will enable the Commission to better and more efficiently serve the dramatically increasing population of blind seniors."

According to the Commission for the Blind:

It is estimated that the cost associated with adult vision problems in the United States is \$51.4 billion. If the expansion is not funded, the growing population of blind seniors will result in deterioration of services, creating additional strain on families, and further taxing state and local resources who must deal with the resulting crisis situations. Family members will be forced to provide care for otherwise healthy seniors, resulting in reduction of the available labor force. In addition, health care resources will be diverted from seniors who are in need of health care due to serious physical and cognitive conditions. The net result will be a negative impact on the economy of New Mexico.

The economic impact is based on a 2007 report issued by Prevent Blindness America, "Prevent Blindness America: Survey - Economic Impact of Vision Problems The Economic Impact of Vision Problems: The Toll of Major Adult Eye Disorders, Visual Impairment and Blindness on the U.S. Economy."

The prevalence statistics are provided by the National Eye Institute, the University of Washington Department Of Ophthalmology, Prevent Blindness America, and the American Foundation for the Blind.

The rate of blindness is increasing dramatically due to the aging of the population and the corresponding increase in age-related eye conditions. It is estimated that there are 1.3 million Americans who are legally blind, and 8.7 million who are visually impaired. 5.5 million Americans over 65 are legally blind or visually impaired. 3.5% of persons over 65 are actually legally blind, which, based on the 2000 census, currently translates to approximately 7,427 New Mexicans over 65 being legally blind, and approximately 35 thousand being visually impaired. 6.3 million Americans will develop Age-Related Macular degeneration (AMD) by 2030, compared to 1.7 million who had AMD in 1995. Based on the most recent census numbers, this means that approximately 22,680 New Mexicans will have AMD by 2030. Currently, 1.2 million Americans are visually impaired due to AMD, with 230 thousand of those being legally blind. 3 million Americans have Glaucoma. The rate of Glaucoma is greater for Hispanics and persons with Diabetes. Adults with Diabetes are nearly twice as likely to develop Glaucoma. There are approximately 16 million Americans with Diabetes, 7 million of whom have Diabetic Retinopathy, with 700 thousand being at present risk of blindness. Each year 65 thousand diabetics develop Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy.