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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/29/09

SPONSOR Harden LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Autism Spectrum Disorder Services SB 207

ANALYST _____

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$3,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB 34, Autistic Child Services Medicaid Plan
 SB 39, Insurance Coverage for Autism Treatment
 SB 43, Voluntary Autism Registry
 SB 53, NMSU Speech-Language Pathology Project
 HB 155, Insurance Coverage for Autism Treatment
 Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY09	FY10	FY11	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$6,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)
 Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)
 New Mexico Health Policy Commission (HPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 207, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Services, appropriates \$2.5 million from the general fund to DOH for the purpose of expanding diagnostic services for individuals suspected of having ASD (\$1 million), intensive interventions and adaptive skill-building services for individuals diagnosed with ASD (\$1 million) and professional development and training for providers of ASD services (\$500 thousand) and \$500 thousand to HED for professional development and training for teachers of children with ASD.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$3 million 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

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The LFC submitted a balanced general fund appropriation recommendation for fiscal year 2010. Any additional general fund expenditures appropriated by the Legislature must be off-set by an equal amount from the appropriation recommendation.

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.

ASD is defined by the American College of Physicians as “severely impaired development of normal communication and social skills.” The federal Center for Disease Control estimates autism affects 1 child in every 150 births. There is no statewide database of autistic children so DOH estimates there are approximately 2,000 children under the age of 18 in New Mexico with some degree of ASD.

There is no known cause for ASD; nor is there an effective cure. However, the Autism Society of America states “autism is treatable” and the earlier the treatment services begin, the better the outcomes. However, treatment is expensive and DOH estimates the average cost is \$29 thousand per child per year for services. Currently approximately \$4 million is appropriated for autism services. A major limitation of this appropriation is that it does not qualify for Medicaid match as it is not included in a Medicaid waiver program.

DOH states current funding is \$2.2 million and provides 100 families with intensive parent skill building (\$377 thousand) and 80 school age children with adaptive skill building (\$1.9 million). The \$1 million appropriation contained in this building would serve approximately 35 additional children with adaptive skill building.

The \$500 thousand for professional development and training would almost double the amount currently being spent and would expand training considerably.

HPC states “Best practices state that a minimum of 25 hours per week of active treatment, begun as soon as an ASD is suspected, can have tremendous results. Some experts believe that as many as 50 percent of children who receive these early, intensive services will no longer need specialized services later in their school years, even before adulthood.”

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

DOH states they would have to expand staff to support the program expansion envisioned in this bill. One FTE, Line Manager, would manage the program and would need administrative support, supplies and office space.

DOH would distribute program funds if the bill is enacted through the contract process beginning with a request for proposal.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

DOH will fund ASD programs through agency appropriations in the General Appropriation Act.

GAC/mt