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SENATE MEMORIAL 65

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO CREATE GENDER-SPECIFIC TREATMENT STANDARDS AND RULES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS SEEKING TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS.

WHEREAS, research clearly demonstrates that women and girls face unique barriers when seeking and receiving treatment for substance abuse disorders as compared with men; and

WHEREAS, women and girls face personal and systemic barriers that prevent them from seeking and receiving treatment for substance abuse disorders; and

WHEREAS, personal barriers include the fear of reprisal from family members, the fear of not being able to care for their children or losing custody of their children, the fear of making life changes and the fear that treatment may not be kept

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1 confidential; and

2 WHEREAS, systemic barriers include a lack of health
3 insurance or other financial assistance to pay for treatment, a
4 lack of linguistic and culturally accessible services, being
5 placed on waiting lists for treatment, the absence of treatment
6 options for women and girls who are pregnant and the inability
7 to obtain child care and transportation while sustaining
8 employment and managing the requirements of other systems of
9 which they may be eligible, such as temporary assistance for
10 needy families; and

11 WHEREAS, despite evidence that gender-specific treatment
12 provides better outcomes for women and girls with substance
13 abuse disorders, most traditional treatment is designed for
14 men; and

15 WHEREAS, in recognition of the unique needs of women and
16 girls, many states are now establishing gender-specific
17 treatment standards; and

18 WHEREAS, a comprehensive model for the treatment of women,
19 girls and their families has been developed to be used as a
20 flexible guide that can be adapted to address community needs
21 in building comprehensive treatment programs for women and
22 girls with substance abuse disorders and to develop gender-
23 specific treatment programs that will encompass all of a
24 woman's or a girl's needs when recovering from a substance
25 abuse disorder; and

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1 WHEREAS, the development of gender-specific treatment best
2 practices will help meet the unique needs of women and girls to
3 overcome the barriers they face when seeking treatment for and
4 recovering from substance abuse disorders; and

5 WHEREAS, gender-specific best practices will move New
6 Mexico toward a vision that all women and girls can receive
7 individualized, high quality, research-based treatment for
8 substance abuse disorders that will improve the chances of
9 successful recovery and cultivate the healthy development of
10 children and families; and

11 WHEREAS, the development of gender-specific treatment best
12 practices will build on the existing capabilities and strengths
13 of New Mexico's services to women and girls; and

14 WHEREAS, creating gender-specific treatment best practices
15 for women and girls with substance abuse disorders will allow
16 better communication to health care providers regarding
17 concrete expectations and a general vision for improved
18 services to women and girls; and

19 WHEREAS, gender-specific treatment best practices are
20 necessary to address the needs of New Mexico women and girls
21 seeking treatment for substance abuse disorders, including
22 clinical treatment, clinical support and community support
23 services; treatment services that are culturally fluent,
24 female-specific and family-centered; and treatment methods that
25 are individualized, nonjudgmental, trauma sensitive, respectful

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1 and based on a woman's or a girl's unique strengths as well as
2 her needs, preferences, experiences and age; and

3 WHEREAS, gender-specific treatment best practices will
4 help provide guidelines for New Mexico to help women and girls
5 with substance abuse disorders find pathways to successful
6 recovery that can last throughout their lifetime;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
8 OF NEW MEXICO that the behavioral health services division of
9 the human services department be requested to convene a work
10 group to create gender-specific treatment standards and rules
11 for women and girls seeking treatment for substance abuse
12 disorders; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group research,
14 recommend and implement best practices; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group be requested to
16 submit a report with recommendations to the legislative health
17 and human services committee by December 1, 2011; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the secretary of human services and the chair of
20 the legislative health and human services committee.