A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TO DIRECT THE

LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE TO HEAR

TESTIMONY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

TO ENSURE A SAFE, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT HOSPITAL

CREDENTIALING PROCESS FOR PHYSICIANS.

     WHEREAS, an essential part of ensuring safe patient care
in any hospital is the credentialing of physicians to practice
in that hospital in a specific, appropriate type of practice;
and

     WHEREAS, while varying from facility to facility, the
hospital credentialing process involves the careful
observation of guidelines such as those published by the joint
commission and the federal centers for medicare and medicaid
services; and

     WHEREAS, most hospitals perform extensive background
checks before credentialing or re-credentialing a physician;
and

     WHEREAS, the credentialing process often involves
consulting the national practitioner database, as well as
checking peer references and work, education and criminal
history, malpractice claims history and medicare and medicaid
fraud databases and other facilities' records; and

     WHEREAS, a hospital must carefully consider all elements

in its credentialing process, as an unduly cumbersome or
lengthy credentialing process will result in inefficiency
without augmenting patient safety, a result that is neither in
the hospital's nor the physician's best interests; and

WHEREAS, the body responsible for credentialing a
physician for a hospital is a committee usually made up of a
hospital's staff physicians; and

WHEREAS, the joint commission, which accredits hospitals,
requires that hospitals repeat credentialing checks on
physicians at least every two years; and

WHEREAS, when a physician wishes to perform a new type of
procedure, the hospital's peer review committee reviews the
procedure and the physician's training and ability to perform
that procedure before approving the procedure; and

WHEREAS, one challenge to an effective hospital
credentialing process is the need for a committee to be
knowledgeable about any procedure it authorizes, despite the
difficulty of being fully informed about a wide variety of
innovative procedures; and

WHEREAS, another challenge to hospital credentialing
committees is that it can be difficult for colleagues to
thoroughly question and vet their fellow staff physicians
while maintaining a spirit of cooperation and collegiality
among physicians at that hospital; and

WHEREAS, without proper credentialing, a hospital's

patients may be subject to the unsafe practice of medicine by a physician who is not qualified to engage in that practice, which may result in bodily harm or even death; and

WHEREAS, a hospital that does not properly vet a physician through the credentialing process may be subject to enormous liability for any malpractice that results;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico legislative council be requested to direct the legislative health and human services committee to conduct a hearing on the subject of hospital physician credentialing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico legislative council direct the legislative health and human services committee to receive testimony from experts on the credentialing process and make recommendations regarding policies and procedures to provide a thorough, effective and efficient credentialing process that ensures patient safety; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative health and human services committee be directed to receive testimony on the subject of hospital credentialing from experts that include the joint commission, the New Mexico medical board, the board of osteopathic medical examiners, the hospital industry, medical and osteopathic physicians and individuals with legal expertise in the field of medical malpractice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the co-chairs of the New Mexico legislative council and the chair and vice chair of the legislative health and human services committee.