

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 217

51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013

Tracking Number: .190655.1

Short Title: Native American Youth Suicide Prevention

Sponsor(s): Representative James Roger Madalena and Others

Analyst: James Ball

Date: February 6, 2013

Bill Summary:

HB 217 makes an appropriation to establish three culturally based Native American youth suicide prevention initiatives through the Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (IBHP).

Fiscal Impact:

\$300,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Human Services Department (HSD) for expenditure in FY 14. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

The appropriation designates \$100,000 to each of the three Native American youth suicide prevention initiatives that focus on suicide prevention, intervention, and post-event assistance to Native American individuals and families, Indian tribes, nations, and pueblos.

Substantive Issues:

According to the Indian Affairs Department (IAD) bill analysis, while effective culturally based prevention and wellness programs are being developed, New Mexico tribal communities still lack critical mental health resources and technical assistance to support community, family, and individual assistance when suicide attempts and completed suicides occur.

According to the Department of Health (DOH) bill analysis the lack of:

- access to culturally appropriate and sensitive mental health services outside of Albuquerque continues to be a problem affecting Native American youth and their families; and
- mental health providers and counseling services in rural, frontier, and tribal areas, as well as the societal level factors that are associated with suicide, such as poverty, unemployment, cultural isolation, and hopelessness, need to be systematically addressed in order to have an impact on this persistent problem in New Mexico.

The DOH bill analysis also states that the department's Office of School and Adolescent Health's (OSAH) Youth Suicide Prevention Program has been working on adolescent suicide prevention since 2005, and culturally appropriate interventions and evaluations for Native Americans have been well established through this program and that a youth suicide prevention coordinator is assigned to specifically address youth suicide prevention.

Background:

IAD states in its analysis of HB 217 that:

- suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth in New Mexico, although suicide rates for Native American youth are nearly twice as high as that of other races and ethnicities;
- in 2010, it is estimated that nearly two dozen Native American youth attempted suicide and another 18 fatalities were documented in western New Mexico alone;
- at least 24 of the 54 youth suicides documented in New Mexico between 2008 and 2010 were Native American youth;
- unrecognized and untreated mental illness is a main culprit for all youth suicides;
- approximately 34 percent of Native American youth in New Mexico in grades 9 through 12 reported feeling sadness and hopelessness; and
- isolation, poverty, loss of cultural and individual identity, historical trauma, substance abuse, and self-esteem issues all play into the increased risk for Native American youth to take their own lives.

Finally, the HSD bill analysis states that its Behavioral Services Division is the single state authority for mental health and that the HSD's cabinet secretary serves as the permanent co-chair of the IBHP.

Committee Referrals:

HHGIC/HAFC

Related Bills:

HB 11 *General Appropriation Act of 2013*

HB 174 *Native American Veteran Suicide Prevention*

SB 162 *Native American Veteran Suicide Prevention*