

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 419a

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .199971.1

Short Title: NMHU Health Career Student Recruitment

Sponsor(s): Representative Nick L. Salazar

Analyst: James Ball

Date: March 11, 2015

AS AMENDED

The House Education Committee amendment adds language requiring students accepted into the demonstration and research program at New Mexico Highlands University to agree to work in New Mexico for two years following graduation in the medical field of their training.

Original Bill Summary:

HB 419 makes an appropriation to establish a demonstration and research program to prepare undergraduate students from small universities for successful entry into medical school or other related health fields, including:

- a focused undergraduate curriculum;
- summer science academies;
- remote learning;
- medical school entrance examination preparation; and
- mentoring by rural physicians and physicians associated with the New Mexico Hispanic Medical Association (NMHMA).

Fiscal Impact:

\$100,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) for expenditure in FY 16. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

The Higher Education Department (HED) reports that this request was not submitted by NMHU to HED as part of the formal budget review process for FY 16 appropriations.

Substantive Issues:

According to HED, workforce shortages in the health professions are exacerbated in rural areas where communities struggle to attract and keep well-trained providers. The training program outlined in HB 419 could help address the rural health professional shortage as students who

come from rural areas may be more likely to practice in those areas after completing their education.

HED also notes that there is a great need for pre-medical and other healthcare education for Hispanics. NMHU enrolls a large percentage of Hispanics and other minority students who could benefit from support in continuing their education in medical school or in other health field post-baccalaureate degree programs.

Background:

An internet search of strategies offered by colleges and universities to support undergraduates in entering medical school or other post-baccalaureate programs in health professions reveals that the typical approach is simply more coursework. The strategy outlined in HB 419 appears to be genuinely innovative.

The website of the NMHMA states that it is a private not-for-profit organization that has been in existence since 1989. NMHMA's mission is to make healthcare accessible and affordable to all New Mexicans by, among other things:

- encouraging and assisting students interested in pursuing careers in healthcare; and
- providing scholarships to students that have made a commitment to provide healthcare in New Mexico.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HHC/HAFC

Related Bills:

SB 385 *Health Undergrads in Underserved Areas*