

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 80

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .197942.1

Short Title: UNM Dental Science Program

Sponsor(s): Senator Howie C. Morales

Analyst: James Ball

Date: January 27, 2015

Bill Summary:

SB 80 makes an appropriation to fund planning for a bachelor of arts and doctor of dental science (BA/DDS) program by the Health Sciences Center (HSC) at the University of New Mexico (UNM).

Fiscal Impact:

\$400,000 is appropriated to the Board of Regents at UNM for expenditure in FY 16. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

According to the fiscal impact report (FIR) from the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), during the LFC's FY 16 budget hearings, HSC and the UNM School of Medicine described the BA/DDS program as modeled on the university's BA/MD program, which focuses on educating New Mexicans on health issues and increasing the number of healthcare providers. The total estimated cost of fully implementing the BA/DDS program is \$8.2 million from FY 16 through FY 25. The program would provide 20 participants with:

- undergraduate bachelor of arts degrees;
- guaranteed admission to a partner, out-of-state dental school; and
- a graduate dental residency at UNM-HSC.

UNM states that this cost is well below the average costs of building and running a dental school, which would involve approximately \$150 million in construction costs and annual operational expenses of approximately \$25 million thereafter.

The FIR states that the \$400,000 General Fund appropriation would allow UNM to:

- develop the supplemental dental health curriculum and programming at the undergraduate level;
- explore contractual relationships with out-of-state dental schools; and
- enhance the existing dental residency program.

The Department of Finance and Administration notes that the appropriation in SB 80 is simply to start planning the program, and that, according to HSC, UNM will require another nine years to completely fund the entire program. By the ninth year UNM will require approximately \$8.0 million in recurring funds.

Substantive Issues:

According to UNM, the BA/DDS program will be designed to offer New Mexicans from underserved minority populations and rural areas a pathway to professional education in dentistry by increasing the number of candidates from these populations in dental schools. Currently, approximately 20 to 25 New Mexicans achieve acceptance to dental schools through traditional pathways open to students with strong backgrounds in math and science. The BA/DDS program, however, will provide students from non-traditional pathways with mentoring in their individual areas of weaknesses, giving them every prospect of success to becoming dentists.

UNM further states that, with dentists retiring in the coming years and expected increased demand for oral health services, additional dentists will be needed in New Mexico. The BA/DDS program is designed to address current and future dentist shortages in New Mexico.

Background:

The FIR states that at a 2012 LFC hearing, UNM-HSC reported that:

- New Mexico has only 0.6 dentists per 1,000 residents, while the national average is 0.8 dentists per 1,000 residents;
- the state ranks in the bottom quartile in the number of dentists per 1,000 population;
- approximately 75 percent of dentists in the state are currently practicing;
- currently practicing dentists are 54 years old or older; and
- 70 percent of practicing dentists are located within a four county area, all along the Rio Grande corridor.

Committee Referrals:

SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 6, *Dental Therapist Licensure & Regulation*

SB 35, *Dental Students in WICHE Program*

SB 155, *Medical, Dental & Behavioral Health Recruits*