

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO
CREATE A STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN DESIGNED TO ADDRESS THE
MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS.

WHEREAS, the department of health estimates that more
than forty thousand New Mexicans are living with the hepatitis
C virus; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, hepatitis C rates in New Mexico
increased by one hundred thirty-three percent; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately four thousand new cases
of hepatitis C infection per year in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the primary risk of infection is sharing
injection drug use equipment; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico continues to experience
disproportionately high overdose death rates associated with
injection drug use; and

WHEREAS, recent epidemiological data from the department
of health suggest a rise in hepatitis C rates among young
women under the age of thirty; and

WHEREAS, the financial and social costs of the hepatitis
C disease burden in New Mexico surpass those associated with
most other viruses, including HIV; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico leads the nation in the rate of
death due to cirrhotic liver disease; and

WHEREAS, hepatitis C can be cured, but access to hepatitis C treatment is impeded by cost or lack of health insurance coverage; and

WHEREAS, hepatitis C treatment can cost up to ninety-five thousand dollars (\$95,000) a month; and

WHEREAS, the social stigma associated with injection drug use and living with hepatitis C may prevent New Mexicans from seeking treatment; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico possesses the intellectual and clinical expertise to address these related epidemics simultaneously;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health be requested to convene a task force to create a statewide strategic plan designed to address the mortality and morbidity associated with the hepatitis C virus; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force research and develop a comprehensive plan to increase access to hepatitis C treatment in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of health be requested to invite representatives from the following to participate in the task force:

- A. the university of New Mexico project ECHO;
- B. the medical assistance division of the human services department;

C. the Bernalillo county community health council;
D. the New Mexico public health association;
E. the Santa Fe county health policy and planning
commission;

- F. the Rio Arriba county health council;
- G. the drug policy alliance;
- H. the southwest care center; and
- I. any other appropriate entity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present
recommendations to the legislative health and human services
committee and the legislative finance committee no later than
November 30, 2015; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
transmitted to the legislative finance committee, the
legislative health and human services committee and the
secretary of health.