

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE THE QUALITY OF ONLINE STUDY COURSES, THE STATE'S ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND CORRESPONDING REGULATIONS FOR LICENSURE IN THE STATE AS A PSYCHOLOGIST.

WHEREAS, the demand for behavioral health care services is increasing, and the state must continuously monitor the adequacy of the behavioral health care work force and resources; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is a mostly rural state that has some of the nation's highest rates of suicide and alcohol and drug use; and

WHEREAS, the publicly funded behavioral health system is a vital safety net for people with serious mental illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia; and

WHEREAS, behavioral health care services are not always sufficient to meet the demand in many regions of the state; and

WHEREAS, in many rural areas, the range of behavioral health care services is insufficient to meet the demand for services; and

WHEREAS, where some mental health services do exist, providers qualified to effectively treat complex diagnoses, including counselors, social workers, psychologists and

psychiatrists with expertise in early childhood mental health, are at times unavailable; and

WHEREAS, current behavioral health professional requirements provide restrictions on an applicant's eligibility to apply for licensure as a psychologist in the state; and

WHEREAS, the state's psychologist licensing procedures require applicants to have a doctoral degree from a program accredited by the American psychological association, and this organization does not currently allow accreditation of programs that are substantially online; and

WHEREAS, the higher education department is statutorily charged with the periodic study of higher education academic program demands, institutional competencies and infrastructure and state work force demands and therefore has the expertise to carry out the requested study;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the higher education department be requested to convene a task force that includes representatives of the regulation and licensing department, the behavioral health services division of the human services department, the New Mexico association of school psychologists, the New Mexico psychological association, the New Mexico state board of psychologist examiners and others to evaluate the quality of online study

courses, the state's licensing procedures, licensure eligibility requirements and corresponding regulations for psychologists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health be requested to hold meetings with students and representatives of nontraditional doctoral programs that are excluded from eligibility on the basis of their use of online methods of education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any recommended changes to the state's licensing procedures, licensure eligibility requirements or corresponding regulations be made to the appropriate interim committee no later than December 1, 2015; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of higher education, the superintendent of regulation and licensing, the director of the behavioral health services division of the human services department, the president of the New Mexico association of school psychologists, the executive director of the New Mexico psychological association and the chair of the New Mexico state board of psychologist examiners.