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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/11/19

SPONSOR Kernan LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Regional Dental School Study Group SM 59

ANALYST Gaussoin

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY19	FY20	FY21	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		Indeterminate but minimal			Nonrecurring	

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Independent Community Colleges (ICC)
 Medical Board (NMMB)
 Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)

No Responses Received

Higher Education Department (HED)
 Higher Education Institutions
 Branch Community Colleges
 Council of University Presidents

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Memorial

Senate Memorial 59 requests that HED convene a regional dental school study group to investigate the feasibility of a partnership between New Mexico and Texas Tech University Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine in El Paso, Texas. The memorial asks the department to invite representatives from state dental associations, dentist education programs, and licensing entities and specifically look at whether a partnership would address access, workforce diversities, and barriers to dental care. The memorial asks that the study group report to LFC and other appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 2019.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The creation and activities of a study group will involve staff time and agency resources and could also involve contracted help. The costs are likely to be minimal.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

ICC notes that, while New Mexico does not have a dental school, the state participates in the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education's student exchange program to provide New Mexico students with access to dental schools in other states. WICHE program students pay lower tuition than otherwise charged to out-of-state students, although not as low as in-state students. Texas Tech does not participate in WICHE, ICC says.

However, ICC notes state law allows New Mexico public colleges and universities to charge in-state tuition to Texans living within 135 miles of the border, and several Texas universities reciprocate by offering lower tuition to similarly situated New Mexico students. ICC suggests the study group explore a similar arrangement with Texas Tech, although state law provides for that arrangement without a formal partnership.

According to the memorial, as a result of New Mexico not having its own dental school, New Mexico students attend out-of-state schools and the resulting student debt discourages them from setting up less lucrative practices in rural New Mexico, including underserved areas like the Permian Basin. The memorial states providing students with access to a dental school would promote diversity in the workforce. The memorial argues that establishing a dental school in New Mexico would be "cost-prohibitive."

NMMB indicates a partnership with Texas Tech could address accessibility in underserved areas and failing to study the possibility would be a missed opportunity.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

RLD reports an increase in the number of licensed dentists in New Mexico would increase the workload of the regulatory board.

HFG/gb