

LFC Requestor: Self Assigned

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS

Section I: General

Chamber: Senate

Category: Bill

Number: 325

Type: Introduced

Date (of THIS analysis): 02/12/2025

Sponsor(s): Pete Campos

Short Title: ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE COUNSELING PROGRAM

Reviewing Agency: Agency 665 - Department of Health

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Section II: Fiscal Impact

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation Contained		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY 25	FY 26		
\$	500.0	Non-recurring	General fund

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY 25	FY 26	FY 27		
\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A	N/A

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-recurring	Fund Affected
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A	N/A

### Section III: Relationship to other legislation

No known relationship with other legislation.

Duplicates: None

Conflicts with: None

Companion to: None

Relates to: None

Duplicates/Relates to an Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act: None

### Section IV: Narrative

#### 1. BILL SUMMARY

a) Synopsis

Senate Bill 325 (SB325) would establish and administer a post-secondary education program for an associate degree in alcohol and drug abuse counseling within all state correctional facilities.

Qualified inmates would be granted an accredited associate degree from Luna Community College, meeting licensing requirements for alcohol and drug abuse counselors. New Mexico Highlands University would develop the curriculum and provide technical assistance to the corrections department.

Is this an amendment or substitution?  Yes  No

Is there an emergency clause?  Yes  No

b) Significant Issues

Training additional drug counselors would have a positive impact on the workforce in New Mexico by potentially increasing the number of drug and alcohol counselors. This could help address shortages which are projected by the Health Resources and Services Administration, which predicts a shortfall of workers in behavioral health roles, including addiction counselors, by 2030.

<https://bh.w.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/data-research/bh-workforce-projections-fact-sheet.pdf>

Providing educational opportunities to become addiction counselors to incarcerated people has an added benefit of creating a work force with lived experience who could better engage with their patients. Peers understand the prison environment and experiences, making them

more relatable to their peers. This knowledge enables them to deliver information in ways that staff members often cannot, effectively educating and mentoring their fellow inmates (University of New Mexico. (n.d.). New Mexico Prisons' Hepatitis C Peer Education Program. Project ECHO. Retrieved from <https://projectecho.unm.edu/story/new-mexico-prisons-hepatitis-c-peer-education/>)

San Quentin Prison facility in California has implemented a similar program where they certified inmates as drug and alcohol counselors. Individuals complete the requirements and became state-recognized addiction treatment counselors. Norris, M. (2007, August 18). Program Certifies Prisoners as Drug Counselors. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2007/08/18/12826718/program-certifies-prisoners-as-drug-counselors>

## 2. PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

- Does this bill impact the current delivery of NMDOH services or operations?  
 Yes  No  
If yes, describe how.
- Is this proposal related to the NMDOH Strategic Plan?  Yes  No
  - Goal 1:** We expand equitable access to services for all New Mexicans
  - Goal 2:** We ensure safety in New Mexico healthcare environments
  - Goal 3:** We improve health status for all New Mexicans
  - Goal 4:** We support each other by promoting an environment of mutual respect, trust, open communication, and needed resources for staff to serve New Mexicans and to grow and reach their professional goals

## 3. FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

- If there is an appropriation, is it included in the Executive Budget Request?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- If there is an appropriation, is it included in the LFC Budget Request?  
 Yes  No  N/A
- Does this bill have a fiscal impact on NMDOH?  Yes  No

## 4. ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Will this bill have an administrative impact on NMDOH?  Yes  No

## 5. DUPLICATION, CONFLICT, COMPANIONSHIP OR RELATIONSHIP

None.

## 6. TECHNICAL ISSUES

Are there technical issues with the bill?  Yes  No

## 7. LEGAL/REGULATORY ISSUES (OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES)

- Will administrative rules need to be updated or new rules written?  Yes  No
- Have there been changes in federal/state/local laws and regulations that make this legislation necessary (or unnecessary)?  Yes  No
- Does this bill conflict with federal grant requirements or associated regulations?  
 Yes  No
- Are there any legal problems or conflicts with existing laws, regulations, policies, or programs?  Yes  No

## 8. DISPARITIES ISSUES

Incarcerated populations do not have ready access to the same educational opportunities. SB325 would provide educational opportunities to inmates which would enable them to help fellow inmates and be trained for a needed profession before being released which could lead to additional opportunities for employment.

According to a January 2025 report from the New Mexico Sentencing Commission, African Americans, despite making up just 2.4% of the state's total population, accounted for 7.9% of those incarcerated. Native Americans, representing 9.4% of the population, comprised 11.2% of the prison population. Similarly, Hispanics, who constitute 44.3% of the state's residents, made up 56.1% of those incarcerated. The report also highlighted a gender gap, with men comprising 90.9% of the state's prison population, while women accounted for only 9.1%. ([profile-of-new-mexico-prison-population-fy-2024.pdf](#))

## 9. HEALTH IMPACT(S)

Drug misuse has a significant impact on the population of New Mexico. 955 New Mexicans died due to a drug overdose in 2023 ([CDC Wonder](#)). Fentanyl was involved in 65% of overdose deaths in 2023 and methamphetamine was involved in 51% of deaths, and 30.7% of overdoses involve both substances. Counties that had both a high number of overdose deaths (>20 deaths) and an overdose death rate greater than the statewide age-adjusted rate (46.3 deaths per 100,000 persons) in 2023 include Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and San Miguel ([NMDOH – Overdose deaths Declined in New Mexico Again](#)). In addition, 1,896 New Mexicans died from alcohol-related causes in 2023, and New Mexico has historically led the nation in alcohol-related deaths (Source: 2023 NMDOH Bureau of Vital Records death files, data analyzed by NMDOH-Center for Health Protection for this analysis). SB325 impacts incarcerated individuals and those with substance use disorders. Expanding treatment programs and increasing the number of counselors could enhance health outcomes for affected populations.

## 10. ALTERNATIVES

None.

## 11. WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL?

If SB325 were not enacted a post-secondary education program for an associate degree in alcohol and drug abuse counseling within all state correctional facilities would not be created.

## 12. AMENDMENTS

None