

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015

INTRODUCED BY

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER HEALTH DISPARITIES TASK FORCE TO ANALYZE HEALTH DISPARITIES AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THOSE HEALTH DISPARITIES.

WHEREAS, the United States department of health and human services has made improving the health, safety and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, known by the acronym "LGBT", a new topic of its nationwide public health campaign, "Healthy People 2020"; and

WHEREAS, the "Healthy People 2020" recommendations include an increase in the number of population-based data systems used to monitor "Healthy People 2020" objectives, which includes in its core objectives a standardized set of questions that identify LGBT populations; and

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1 WHEREAS, there has been growing research and recognition
2 of the roles that social stigma and discrimination play in the
3 health of sexual and gender minorities and that the discussion
4 has expanded beyond sexual behavior; and

5 WHEREAS, LGBT individuals also appear to be at higher risk
6 than their straight counterparts for some chronic conditions
7 such as asthma, disability and arthritis; and

8 WHEREAS, studies by the federal institute of medicine and
9 the board on the health of select populations have found that
10 lesbians and bisexual women have higher rates of breast cancer
11 than heterosexual women; and

12 WHEREAS, the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*
13 reports that lesbians and bisexual women get less routine
14 health care than other women, including colon, breast and
15 cervical cancer screening; and

16 WHEREAS, research suggests that LGBT individuals face
17 health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination
18 and denial of their civil and human rights; and

19 WHEREAS, according to a survey entitled "Injustice at
20 Every Turn, A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination
21 Survey", nineteen percent of transgender individuals surveyed
22 report being refused medical care due to their transgender
23 status or gender-nonconforming status, with people of color
24 reporting even higher rates of medical care discrimination; and

25 WHEREAS, over one-fourth, twenty-eight percent, of

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1 participants in the transgender survey report that they
2 postponed medical care due to their experiences of
3 discrimination in the medical care sector; and

4 WHEREAS, the transgender population surveyed live in
5 extreme poverty and are nearly four times more likely than the
6 non-transgender population to have a household income of less
7 than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) a year; and

8 WHEREAS, a staggering forty-one percent of respondents in
9 the transgender survey report having attempted suicide,
10 compared to one and six-tenths percent of the general
11 population, with reported rates even higher for the following
12 respondents:

13 A. fifty-five percent among individuals who lost a
14 job due to bias;

15 B. fifty-one percent for individuals who were
16 harassed or bullied in school;

17 C. sixty-one percent for individuals who were
18 victims of physical assault; and

19 D. sixty-four percent for individuals who were
20 victims of sexual assault; and

21 WHEREAS, at least forty-seven thousand adults and twelve
22 thousand five hundred adolescents in New Mexico identify as a
23 sexual minority, a classification that includes lesbians, gays
24 and bisexuals and is known by the acronym "LGB"; and

25 WHEREAS, LGB adults are more likely to report having

1 depression and anxiety and are more likely to have ever
2 attempted suicide than their heterosexual or "straight"
3 counterparts; and

4 WHEREAS, LGB adults smoke cigarettes at twice the rate of
5 straight adults, putting them at increased risk for tobacco-
6 related diseases and death; and

7 WHEREAS, smoking rates decreased significantly in the
8 straight adult population between 2005 and 2010, but smoking
9 rates increased in lesbian and gay populations and remained
10 high in the bisexual population; and

11 WHEREAS, LGB youths are twice as likely to be bullied at
12 school than straight youths; and

13 WHEREAS, LGB youths are three times more likely to skip
14 school because of safety issues than straight youths; and

15 WHEREAS, LGB youths are twice as likely to binge drink
16 than straight youths; and

17 WHEREAS, LGB youths are almost three times as likely to
18 smoke cigarettes than straight youths; and

19 WHEREAS, LGB youths are more likely to use marijuana or
20 other drugs than straight youths; and

21 WHEREAS, the department of health reports that gay and
22 bisexual men and other men who have sex with men comprise the
23 majority of human immunodeficiency virus cases since the
24 beginning of the epidemic in New Mexico, accounting for two
25 thousand one hundred ninety-eight cases or seventy and three

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1 one-hundredths percent of all cumulative diagnoses;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
3 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of health be requested
4 to convene an "LGBTQ health disparities task force" to examine
5 the current state of health and wellness among New Mexicans who
6 identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer and to
7 perform a gap analysis of the needs that exist and remain
8 unaddressed; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LGBTQ health disparities
10 task force examine the disparities in physical and behavioral
11 health outcomes that exist between New Mexicans who identify as
12 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer and New Mexicans
13 who identify as heterosexual or straight, including, among the
14 latter, those whose assigned gender matches their gender
15 identity or orientation; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LGBTQ health disparities
17 task force be requested to employ a "health in all policies
18 model" that examines the environmental, socioeconomic, cultural
19 and other social determinants of health alongside areas such as
20 epidemiology, population health, health care service
21 utilization and health care finance and delivery systems; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of health be
23 requested to invite to participate in the LGBTQ health
24 disparities task force representatives with expertise relating
25 to the following:

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- 1 A. New Mexico's diverse LGBTQ communities;
- 2 B. health;
- 3 C. the well-being of children and families;
- 4 D. public benefits programs;
- 5 E. law;
- 6 F. education;
- 7 G. aging;
- 8 H. disability; and
- 9 I. public administration; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of health be
11 requested to invite to participate in the LGBTQ health
12 disparities task force representatives from the department of
13 health, the children, youth and families department, the human
14 services department, the aging and long-term services
15 department, the Indian affairs department, the public education
16 department, the higher education department, equality New
17 Mexico and the transgender resource center; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LGBTQ health disparities
19 task force be requested to compile and publish a report that
20 includes the task force's recommendations for addressing the
21 health disparities it has identified and to present the task
22 force's report to the legislative health and human services
23 committee and other appropriate legislative committees by
24 November 1, 2015; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
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1 transmitted to the governor; the secretaries of health,
2 children, youth and families, human services, aging and long-
3 term services, Indian affairs, public education and higher
4 education; and to the executive directors of equality New
5 Mexico and the transgender resource center.

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