



2022 Legislative Session

House Bill 97 – “Rural Health Care Project Loans”

Problem

New Mexico suffers from an on-going shortage of health care professionals to serve the needs of New Mexico’s patients. Although the health care workforce shortage exists statewide, it disproportionately impacts rural communities. The following numbers come directly from the New Mexico Health Care Workforce Committee 2021 Annual Report.

Profession	Number Needed ¹	Net Change Since 2013	Counties Meeting Benchmark
Primary Care Physicians	328	-350	6 out of 33
OB-GYN Physicians	56	-27	8 out of 33
General Surgeons	10	-13	11 out of 33
Psychiatrists	117	-16	5 out of 33
RNs and CNSs	6,223	-174	1 out of 33
Certified Nurse Practitioners	238	+643	9 out of 33
Certified Nurse-Midwives	13	-2	12 out of 33
Physicians Assistants	249	+171	4 out of 33
Pharmacists	521	-164	3 out of 33

As can be seen, New Mexico has suffered a net loss of health care professionals since 2013 and there is a dire need for health care professionals in every area of practice.

Proposal

Reduce financial barriers to opening, expanding, and operating medical practices in rural New Mexico by providing low interest loans to health care professionals.

Highlights

1. Appropriate \$7.5 million from the general fund to the Rural Health Care Project revolving fund;
2. Provide qualified rural health care providers with loans up to \$500,000 to open, expand, and operate rural practices with interest rates equal to one-half of the WSJ prime rate.
3. The New Mexico Medical Society **SUPPORTS** the “Rural Health Care Project Loans” bill as one tool that can help New Mexico resolve the ever-growing need for health care services in rural New Mexico.

¹ The “Number Needed” represents the number of clinicians needed in any one area of practice to meet the national benchmark without redistributing New Mexico’s current health care workforce.