

MINUTES OF THE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO
HEALTH POLICY COMMISSION
MEETING

February 17, 2006

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lopez called a regular meeting of the State of New Mexico Health Policy Commission (HPC) to order on Friday, February 17, 2006, at approximately 9:05 a.m. at the Health Policy Commission Office, 2055 South Pacheco, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Members Present

Waldo Anton
Dr. Frank Hesse
Andy R. Lopez
Moises Morale
Dr. Michael Trujillo

Members Absent

Rick Crabtree (*excused*)
Seferino Montano (*excused*)
Dr. Miles Nelson (*excused*)
Alicia Roman (*excused*)

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Lopez welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Staff members Dr. Larragoite, Kooch Jacobus, Joel Flores and Leticia Rutledge were present at the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Morales moved for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Anton seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous voice vote.

Approval of Minutes from January 20, 2006 Meeting

Commissioner Anton moved for approval of the January meeting minutes as written. Commissioner Morales seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Larragoite reported over the last three months he had been engaged in establishing a strategic work plan and an effective assessment of the work of the agency for the Health Policy Commissioners. The work plan, which will ensure the agency will continue to be effective will be developed for the calendar year. He added the work plan was originally structured around the calendar year but due to budgetary issues as well as the legislative calendar, he felt the plan would work best structured around the annual calendar.

Dr. Larragoite stated one of HPC's statutory requirements is to provide forums to discuss and explore ideas and problems surrounding complex and controversial health policy and planning issues by collaborating with others to promote optimal health, and to assure available, accessible, and acceptable basic health care services. He explained the first section of the work plan will revolve around the Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Health (SB 34) which requires HPC, the Department of Health (DOH) and other state agencies to develop a comprehensive strategy plan for health emphasizing prevention, personal responsibility, access, and quality.

Dr. Larragoite reported meetings have already taken place with DOH and it has been decided that HPC will take the lead on the *Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Health*, (SB34). He suggested in an effort to accomplish both tasks within the timeframe allowed, HPC meetings could be integrated with public input meetings which would be held around the state.

Dr. Larragoite explained in order for HPC to remain effective in the area of health policy, the Commission needed to begin assessing and identifying health policy topics. Staff could then be directed to do the necessary research on the health policy topics identified and prepare draft policy recommendations for the Commission's review and approval. In order to be prepared for the 2007 legislative session, the policy recommendations must be completed by September 15, 2006.

Dr. Larragoite stated some topics already identified include:

- NM aging population and its impact on the already overstretched delivery system
- Veterans' health issues
- Economic credentialing of physicians
- Public health epidemics
- Lifestyle choices such as tobacco use, nutrition, lack of physical fitness which would tie into health insurance incentives
- Border health issues/environmental health

- Limited health care access for the age 0 – 5 population
- Primary care in rural areas
- Indian Health Service
- Behavioral Health

Dr. Larragoite stated that at the March HPC meeting he would be reporting on the outcome of his scheduled meeting with the Veterans Administration where they would be discussing veterans' health issues. Dr. Trujillo pointed out veterans' health issues would eventually impact the state because of federal decreases, understaffing of the VA Hospital in Albuquerque, returning military with behavioral problems, and the lack of access in rural areas. Commission Morales and Ms. Jacobus pointed out the families of veterans are also burdened and should receive some type of federal funding.

After a brief discussion, other topics identified were: educating legislators on primary care funding systems so that they understand how primary care clinics are reimbursed by Medicaid; behavioral health; substance abuse; provider shortages; and uninsured.

HEALTH POLICY STRATEGIC PLAN

Howard Gershon reported the HPC strategic plan process commenced in December but was delayed due to the legislative session. Because of this delay, the plan is one month behind and will be ready in April instead of March as originally scheduled.

Mr. Gershon reported he started the strategic plan process in December by interviewing and meeting with staff members, compiling their views on the strengths and weaknesses of HPC and what opportunities they present for the future. Mr. Gershon has also met with and interviewed approximately 15 people who interact with the HPC, such as UNM, the Trial Lawyers Association, and a variety of state agencies asking for their views of HPC, what it is doing, not doing, should be doing, and how their interactions with HPC have been.

Mr. Gershon pointed out that from the interviews held and the information gathered to date, there is a general lack of understanding among many external groups as to what is required by the HPC. Some interviewed felt the HPC was invisible while others who have participated in task forces and worked with the HPC did not seem to know the purpose of the HPC. Some of the individuals interviewed perceived the HPC as being reactive instead of proactive. Mr. Gershon stated this gives the HPC a real challenge to move forward by clarifying its role, heightening visibility, and becoming more involved in health policy.

Mr. Gershon stated people do recognize the HPC's limited resources and understand that there may not be adequate funding or staff to accomplish tasks. With this in mind and as it moves forward, the HPC should think creatively about accessing resources and funding outside the traditional legislative budgets by looking at federal monies or private monies available through foundations.

Mr. Gerson explained he would have a more formal presentation at the March meeting and would present the Commission with a draft plan for review and comments at the April meeting.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dr. Larragoite reported Universal Coverage, which would guarantee all New Mexicans with health care coverage, came out of the Legislative Health & Human Services Committee (LHHSC). HPC was originally identified as the lead; however, as it moved forward, Secretary Hyde got involved and recommended Insure New Mexico Council (INMC), which was created by executive order, to be the lead agency. As the process rolled out, it appeared the reason the council was formed was to move forward on the insurance coverage with an appropriation of \$500,000. It appeared the council already had an objective in mind as well as the outcome and that's why HPC was taken out of the whole process.

Ms. Leticia Rutledge reported HPC staff was requested to review and analyze 150 bills in the 30-day legislative session, but ended up reviewing and analyzing 158 bills, 29 of which had not been requested. Dr. Larragoite added with the requests being done on a 24-hour turn basis, staff was required to work after hours and weekends to meet the deadline. Ms. Jacobus added each bill was reviewed by two staff members before going out and the process was quite extensive but rewarding.

Dr. Larragoite provided the Commission with a summary of the 11 bills specifically naming HPC pointing out that only one actually made it out of the legislature. The one memorial, which received HPC's support at the January meeting, was to study the impact of the shortage of bilingual behavioral health professionals and retention.

Dr. Larragoite reported HB 493, sponsored by Representative Picraux, requests HPC to fund a study to examine alternatives for resolving problems relating to reducing the injuries suffered in the course of childbirth, compensation for those injured in the course of childbirth, and the cost and availability of malpractice insurance for childbirth health-care professionals and institutions. The original appropriation was for \$80,000 but was brought down to \$30,000. Dr. Larragoite added this study will actually be a continuation of the malpractice study done by staff last year.

Dr. Larragoite stated any malpractice bills or memorials were successfully killed by the Trial Lawyers Association (TLA) who actually endorsed one bill sponsored by Representative Picraux to provide a joint underwriting agreement (JUA) to insure coverage for those health care providers not covered under the Medical Malpractice Act which is specifically limited to physicians. The bill eventually died for lack of endorsement once the TLA realized there were no caps included.

Ms. Jacobus announced that Commissioner Moises Morales and Dr. Miles Nelsons' appointment to HPC was approved by the Rules Committee and voted on by the NM Senate. The process for both commissioners was very positive.

Ms. Jacobus reported the bilingual behavioral competency memorial was included in a package of memorials and had made it through the house at the last minute. As of this morning, she wasn't sure if the house finally voted on it, explaining a joint memorial has to be approved by the committees on both the house and senate side. A memorial then goes through the house and senate a second time for approval.

Ms. Jacobus reported the members to serve on the board created by the universal health bill are being reshuffled and she is not sure who exactly will be appointed to the board. The bill did not pass but the money in the budget, \$120,000, will be given to the Legislative Council. Ms. Jacobus stated if the junior bill, SB 415, passes, there would be another \$200,000 given to the Legislative Council who will then determine the committee's membership. Dr. Larragoite added that regardless of where the study may end up, HPC will still have the ability to give perspective because of the preliminary studies done.

Ms. Jacobus explained it is very difficult to get any memorial heard especially if there is no funding attached to it. With over 1,600 bills introduced during the 30-day session, only 147 bills and memorials actually got through. During the session, UNM requested HPC to provide some key data regarding discharges from UNM. Staff will be following-up and meeting with UNM staff to go over this data.

In response to a question by Dr. Hesse, Ms. Jacobus stated approximately 1% of the health passed and Dr. Larragoite added it was less than 2%. Dr. Hesse suggested an education session for legislators and others on health issues, problems and needs. Commissioner Anton said if HPC could obtain funding from foundations as suggested by Mr. Gerson, legislators could be educated on the lack of health care in New Mexico. Dr. Larragoite pointed out the Legislative Health & Human Services Interim Committee (LHHSIC) made up by both Senators and Representatives is not a standing committee during the session. He suggested HPC recommend the creation of a health committee in both the house and senate with an educational component necessary for legislators to be informed.

Dr. Hesse moved to defer this issue to HPC's March meeting and requesting staff to research how this could be done most effectively. Commissioner Morales seconded the motion; which passed by unanimous voice vote.

BUDGET REVIEW

Dr. Larragoite reported HPC received two cuts during the legislative session. Two full time employee positions were removed from the HPC due to the fact the two positions were vacant for over a year. One position, the Network Administrator position, was vacant for over a year because the Governor's IT froze the position, and the second position, the Economist position, had been vacant for over a year but was filled in October 2005. Dr. Larragoite stated since the position has been filled, he will be meeting

with DFA to discuss the possibility of exchanging that position with the Administrative Assistant position which is at a lower pay.

Dr. Larragoite stated the State's CIO, Ray Soto, is committed to help HPC with the IT situation. Dr. Larragoite will work with SPO to get the Computer Analyst position reclassified to an IT Manager position.

Dr. Larragoite stated he and Ms. Vigil have reviewed HPC's mid-year budget and have identified approximately \$60,000 to be put into training, conference expense, and staff development. The commissioners can also use the money to attend conferences.

Dr. Larragoite stated the next HPC meeting will be on March 17, 2006 where Ms. Vigil will provide a summary of the budget adjustments.

ADJOURN

Upon motion by Commissioner Morales and seconded by Commissioner Anton, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:55 a.m.

Approved by:

Andy R. Lopez, NMHPC Chair

Date

Submitted by:
Michelle Gorman

(DRAFT-----DRAFT-----DRAFT)

(Minutes shall be approved, amended or disapproved at the next meeting where a quorum is present. Minutes shall not become official until approved by the policy-making body.)