



SENATOR GREG BACA
Senate Republican Leader

SENATOR CRAIG BRANDT
Senate Republican Whip

SENATOR MARK MOORES
Senate Republican Caucus Chair

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Contact: Joaquin Romero

joaquin.romero@nmlegis.gov

(505) 506-5798

Senator Crystal Diamond Brantley Responds to LFC CARA Report

SANTA FE— Today, the Legislative Finance Committee presented [a blistering evaluation](#) of New Mexico’s Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) implementation by the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD). The evaluation exposes widespread failure to implement plans of care for families born with drug-addicted infants. Of particular concern is the fact that 42 percent of families who were given a plan of care were completely unaware that they had a plan. Further, almost half of families with a plan of care are not referred to substance use treatment and only 15 percent accept referrals.

In 2023, former Senator Gay Kernan (R-Hobbs) proposed Senate Bill 150 which would have required CYFD to conduct family assessments in the event of noncompliance with a CARA plan of care. The bill unanimously passed the Senate but died in the House.

Senator Crystal Diamond Brantley (R-Elephant Butte), who introduced a number of reforms to both CARA and CYFD in 2023, issued the following statement regarding the report:

“Today CYFD blamed this damning report on COVID, the media, and everyone but the parties who are actually responsible. This report is clear—New Mexico is failing the vulnerable children of this state, and the department, the Governor, and Democrat leadership have done nothing to fix it. Newborn babies with drug addictions or substance exposures need our help the most, and CARA plans of care are a first step at ending cycles of abuse, poverty, and addiction.”

“I plan to bring back Senator Kernan’s bill to require that the department implement these plans of care and conduct assessments in cases of non-compliance. Enough with the excuses and blaming the media for shedding light on this and other crises at CYFD. We must do better for our vulnerable children and families.”

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