

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number: SB 48**

**52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015**

**Tracking Number: .198148.1**

**Short Title: NMSU Mental Health Nurses Staying in NM**

**Sponsor(s): Senator Mary Kay Papen and Representative Terry H. McMillan**

**Analyst: James Ball**

**Date: February 19, 2015**

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**Bill Summary:**

SB 48 makes an appropriation to New Mexico State University (NMSU) to increase the number of psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNP) who graduate from the university and remain in New Mexico for at least three years following graduation.

**Fiscal Impact:**

\$395,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of NMSU for expenditure in FY 16. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

**Fiscal Issues:**

In recent years and for FY 15, according to the fiscal impact report (FIR) from the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), NMSU has received approximately \$400,000 annually to provide the state's only doctoral nurse practitioner (DNP) program with a psychiatry and behavioral health concentration.

For FY 16, the LFC recommends \$702,000 in recurring General Fund appropriation for this program, which represents a \$300,000 or 75 percent increase over FY 15. The appropriation proposed in SB 48 is approximately \$100,000 less.

The Executive's FY 16 recommendation for this program maintains the FY 15 General Fund appropriation.

**Technical Issues:**

Lines 22-23 of SB 48 indicate that the goal of the program is to retain psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners for at least three years following graduation. Current language would appear to allow for the three years to be non-consecutive and at any time following graduation. The sponsor might consider clarifying the intent of the program by amending language on these lines to specify if the years of service are to be immediately following graduation and if they are intended to be consecutive.

**Substantive Issues:**

According to NMSU, the federal government has designated 32 of the 33 counties in New Mexico as health professional shortage areas, indicating that there is an immediate need to improve access to healthcare providers across the state. The New Mexico Health Data Report of 2012 noted that only 12 percent of the state’s health clinics offer mental health or behavioral health services. The NMSU School of Nursing proposes to address the gaps and inadequacies of the current mental health treatment system by:

- increasing admissions to the Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program;
- offering a one-year certificate as Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner to advanced practice nurses already certified in another specialty;
- opening a nurse-managed clinic where faculty will have the resources to train and supervise additional students; and
- expanding access to mental health services by training PMHNP students to use telehealth technology to treat individuals and families coping with mental health issues in rural and underserved areas of the state.

**Background:**

According to the University of New Mexico, Psychiatric Mental Health Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (PMH-APRNs) offer primary care services to the psychiatric-mental health population. PMH-APRNs assess, diagnose, and treat individuals and families with psychiatric disorders or the potential for such disorders using their full scope of therapeutic skills, including the prescription of medication and administration of psychotherapy. PMH-APRNs also contribute to policy development, quality improvement, practice evaluation, and healthcare reform.

The *New Mexico Workforce Committee Report of 2014* shows that 110, or 8.0 percent, of the 1,366 APRNs are practicing as PMH-NP in New Mexico, with the following numbers below by county:

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>PMH-APRNs</b>
Bernalillo	56
Chavez	1
Curry	1
Doña Ana	21
Eddy	4
Grant	1
McKinley	3
Otero	1
Rio Arriba	2
Roosevelt	1
San Juan	3
San Miguel	4
Sandoval	2
Santa Fe	7
Torrance	1
Valencia	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>

**Committee Referrals:**

SEC/SFC

**Related Bills:**

SB 210 *General Appropriation Act of 2015*  
SB 299 *Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice*  
HB 5 *General Appropriation Act of 2015*