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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: House Memorial 36

SHORT TITLE: Nursing Shortage Task Force

SPONSOR: Cates/Royal Caballero

LAST UPDATE: _____ **ORIGINAL DATE:** 02/04/2026 **ANALYST:** Rommel

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
BON	No fiscal impact	Indeterminate but minimal	No fiscal impact		Nonrecurring	Other state funds

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Board of Nursing

Higher Education Department

University of New Mexico

New Mexico Independent Community Colleges

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Memorial 36

House Memorial 36 (HM36) requests the New Mexico Board of Nursing convene a multidisciplinary task force to address the state's nursing shortage. The task force would include representatives from nursing professional organizations, hospitals, nursing education programs, post-secondary institutions, and licensed practical nurse programs. It is charged with identifying barriers to nursing education expansion, enrollment, graduation, and workforce retention, and with developing recommendations to close the gap between current nursing graduate output and projected workforce needs. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the interim Legislative Health and Human Services Committee and the Legislative Finance Committee.

HM36 does not specify a date by which the report is to be submitted.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Memorials do not contain appropriations and are not enforceable as state law. The study requested in this memorial is within the normal operations of the agencies involved and is unlikely to result in significant costs.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

New Mexico continues to face a critical, chronic shortage of health professionals across the disciplines, particularly in rural areas. Thirty-two of 33 New Mexico counties are designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in primary care, behavioral health, and/or dental health. On average, New Mexico needs at least an additional 5,000 healthcare workers to address current shortages. In December 2025, according to the Workforce Solutions Department, there were 3,025 online job postings for nurses, the largest number of all postings tracked.

The Board of Nursing indicates it can convene stakeholders and lead the task force.

UNM notes:

The University of New Mexico College of Nursing (UNM CON) supports the intent of HM36 and agrees New Mexico needs a coordinated strategy to address the nursing workforce shortage. UNM CON has already expanded enrollment and deployed state investments to grow programs (e.g., undergraduate honors, Freshman Direct Entry, Accelerated BSN programs) and remains committed to continued growth. UNM CON admissions have increased by over 112 percent from Fiscal Year 2015, growing from 322 to 684, demonstrating strong commitment to addressing the New Mexico's nursing workforce shortage

The Higher Education Department (HED) notes:

The Legislature has appropriated funding through Research and Public Service Projects (RPSPs) to support nursing programs statewide. Starting in Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27), nursing RPSPs have been rolled into the higher education institutions' instructional and general (I&G) base funding. However, the long-term impact of sustained RPSP investments on nursing program capacity and graduate output remains unclear.

HM36 requests that the Board of Nursing convene and manage a broad, multi-sector task force focused on nursing education capacity, workforce retention, and expansion of higher education programs. While the Board of Nursing plays an important role in licensure and regulation, many of the issues identified in the memorial, including faculty compensation, program capacity, and academic credentialing, pathways fall primarily within the purview of higher education institutions, state higher education agencies, and institutional governing boards. Clear delineation of roles and coordination mechanisms may be necessary to ensure recommendations are actionable.

The memorial also states that, despite recent appropriations to expand nursing education capacity, enrollment and degree completion in nursing programs are not increasing at the

rate needed to meet workforce demand. However, recent findings from NMHED's New Mexico Endowment Funding for Education and Health Workforce Programs: Institutional Survey Report suggest a more nuanced picture. Institutions reported that endowment funding for nursing faculty support was relatively successful, but persistent challenges remain in recruiting and retaining qualified faculty.

New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (NMICC) comments:

... Areas not addressed in the HM36 but which could provide valuable information include:

- Utilizing the framework established by HM36, examining each nursing licensure type on its own. For example, nurses with an associate degree or bachelor degree license have the same scope of practice. Licensed practical nurses have a narrower scope of practice. In New Mexico nurse practitioners provide care independently.
- Successfully passing the appropriate nursing licensure exam is required in order to be licensed. An examination of passage rates should be included.
- Upon successful completion of an individual's nursing education, they may choose not to practice. The study could examine the barriers to entering New Mexico's nursing workforce.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HED further notes:

Nursing workforce shortages are immediate, but nursing education is a multi-year pipeline. Even with the successful expansion of program capacity, increases in the number of licensed nurses would not be realized for several years. Policymakers may wish to consider how task force recommendations align with both short-term workforce needs and long-term pipeline development. Further, HM36 focuses on statewide supply, but workforce shortages are often most acute in rural and frontier areas. Even if overall graduate numbers increase, geographic maldistribution may persist without targeted incentives, clinical partnerships, or rural training pathways. Addressing where nurses practice, in addition to how many graduate, may be an important component of long-term workforce planning.

HLR/cf