

1 A JOINT MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE PUBLIC  
3 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STUDY THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH SERVICES IN  
4 THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS USING SCHOOL NURSES.

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6 WHEREAS, school nurses coordinate student health  
7 services, conduct health assessments and screenings, provide  
8 clinical care, administer medications, identify abused and  
9 neglected children, provide before- and after-school health  
10 programs, provide health education for students, staff and  
11 parents, identify health and safety concerns in school  
12 environments and save lives in emergency situations; and

13 WHEREAS, school nurse positions have been eliminated in  
14 a greater proportion than other positions within the  
15 educational system because services that are not mandated by  
16 law are frequently cut disproportionately regardless of the  
17 benefit to students; and

18 WHEREAS, more and more students with severe chronic  
19 illnesses or developmental disabilities are attending  
20 schools; and

21 WHEREAS, almost seven percent of public school districts  
22 do not have a registered nurse on staff; and

23 WHEREAS, the ratio of school nurse to students varies  
24 from a low of one to four hundred eighty-eight to a high of  
25 one to two thousand one hundred fifty, and forty-five percent

1 of school districts do not meet the national standard of one  
2 nurse to every seven hundred fifty students; and

3 WHEREAS, in sixty-nine percent of school districts,  
4 there are fewer than one registered nurse for every two  
5 schools; and

6 WHEREAS, New Mexico experiences a high teen pregnancy  
7 rate, youth drug use, the highest level of youth poverty in  
8 the country and a high rate of uninsured children; and

9 WHEREAS, poor health of students contributes to  
10 absenteeism and academic failure, and, historically, reducing  
11 absenteeism and improving student health have been the most  
12 important reasons for school nursing services; and

13 WHEREAS, the House Joint Memorial 3 task force that met  
14 in 2001 and 2002 identified several broad system-level issues  
15 that could not be answered without further study;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the  
18 public education department be requested to create a task  
19 force to study the appropriate use and staffing of nurses in  
20 the public schools; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be requested  
22 to answer the following questions, which were left unanswered  
23 by the earlier task force:

24 A. what constitutes adequate nursing supervision  
25 of ancillary staff;

1           B. what is the appropriate level of nursing  
2 presence in New Mexico schools;

3           C. how do the health and educational systems  
4 become better integrated across all New Mexico school  
5 systems; and

6           D. how do school nurses interface with other  
7 health care providers and services within the school systems;  
8 and

9           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force look at these  
10 issues in the context of different geographical needs,  
11 economic disparity, cultural differences, acuity of health  
12 needs and funding; and

13           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be made up of  
14 representatives of the department of health, the public  
15 education department, the human services department, the  
16 Indian health service, school districts, the school nurses  
17 association, school administrators, an education-health  
18 assistant organization, the New Mexico pediatric society,  
19 parents' groups the Human Services Department, the Navajo and  
20 Albuquerque Area Indian Health Services and other appropriate  
21 advocacy groups; and

22           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its  
23 findings to the legislative education study committee and the  
24 legislative health and human services committee by October  
25 2005; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of health and the secretary of public education.

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