

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF NURSING TO COLLABORATE WITH THE NEW MEXICO CENTER FOR NURSING EXCELLENCE, THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF A SHORTAGE OF NURSING INSTRUCTORS ON THE STATUS OF NURSING IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, the United States and New Mexico are experiencing a shortage of nurses; and

WHEREAS, according to a report, *2008: Status of Nursing in New Mexico*, published by the New Mexico center for nursing excellence, despite an increase in the number of registered nurses in New Mexico over the last five years, the supply of nurses is not meeting the demand; and

WHEREAS, this report states that the vacancy rate for registered nurses in acute care hospitals is ten and seven-tenths percent compared to a national vacancy rate of eight percent; and

WHEREAS, according to the university of New Mexico's bureau of business and economic research, the rate at which nurses retire is expected to rapidly accelerate over the next fifteen years, peaking in the year 2020, raising the question of whether the nursing education system has the capacity to bring new registered nurses into the work force as rapidly as current nurses retire; and

WHEREAS, according to the university of New Mexico's bureau of business and economic research, the number of qualified applicants accepted to nursing school declined between 2004 and 2005, with only forty-eight percent of qualified applicants being accepted to New Mexico schools in 2005; and

WHEREAS, if this trend were to continue, it would suggest that schools may have maximized their ability to grow their programs within the current system, structure and funding sources; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico center for nursing excellence reports that twenty-one percent of associate degree nursing programs and twenty-two percent of bachelor of science nursing programs are funded with non-recurring, soft funds; and

WHEREAS, the center also reports that associate degree nursing programs have a ten percent faculty vacancy rate, and bachelor of science nursing programs have a thirteen and five-tenths percent faculty vacancy rate, and on average, twenty-five percent of all nursing faculty will retire within five years; and

WHEREAS, salaries for associate degree nursing faculty averaged forty-four thousand four hundred sixty-two dollars (\$44,462) in 2007 compared to a community equivalent salary of seventy-one thousand five hundred dollars (\$71,500) for an associate degree nurse; the salary for a full-time masters of

science nursing faculty was seventy-six thousand four hundred dollars (\$76,400) compared to a comparably educated clinical nurse in the community of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000) during the same time period; and

WHEREAS, in a survey of New Mexico nurse educators from public colleges and universities conducted by the center, all six programs that responded identified the lack of permanent funding as either a major barrier or a moderate barrier to increasing enrollment into nursing programs; and

WHEREAS, the disparity between the wages paid to practicing nurses and the average wage paid to full-time nursing faculty can lead to faculty being drawn out of academia and into the practice of clinical nursing; and

WHEREAS, over time, the lack of sufficient faculty leads to a bottleneck in the nursing education system with qualified applicants being turned away, or being put on waiting lists for admission; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for an assessment of factors, including appropriate salaries, that are necessary to attract nurses into teaching roles to enable schools of nursing to admit enough qualified applicants to address the nursing shortage in the state; and

WHEREAS, a long-term plan is needed to ensure that the state's schools of nursing have sufficient faculty to admit, educate and graduate nurses to join the state's health care

workforce; and

WHEREAS, the board of nursing is charged with facilitating the continued improvement of nursing education programs and with evaluating programs of nursing with regard to standards and rules;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the board of nursing be requested to collaborate with the New Mexico center for nursing excellence, the higher education department and other agencies and organizations to study the impact of a shortage of nursing instructors on the status of nursing in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify the funding that would be necessary to hire and retain an adequate number of nursing faculty at public colleges and universities; the number of qualified applicants who are turned away or put on waiting lists for admission to nursing schools; the factors that would entice current faculty facing retirement to remain on the faculty; the factors that would entice nurses who have retired from clinical practice to join the faculty of nursing schools; and other factors that are determinants of the success of a school of nursing at educating a sufficient number of nurses to meet the demand in the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify and recommend long-term, sustainable solutions to the shortage of nursing instructors at the state's schools of nursing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of New Mexico school of nursing, the New Mexico state university school of nursing, an association representing community colleges and an association representing associate degree schools of nursing participate in the study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and recommendations of this study be presented to the interim legislative health and human services committee by November 1, 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the board of nursing, the secretary of higher education and the New Mexico center for nursing excellence.