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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 40
49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY
Eleanor Chavez

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-
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1 tenths percent compared to a national vacancy rate of eight
2 percent; and

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

10 WHEREAS, according to the university of New Mexico's
11 bureau of business and economic research, the number of
12 qualified applicants accepted to nursing school declined
13 between 2004 and 2005, with only forty-eight percent of
14 qualified applicants being accepted to New Mexico schools in
15 2005; and

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

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

24 WHEREAS, the center also reports that associate degree
25 nursing programs have a ten percent faculty vacancy rate, and

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1 bachelor of science nursing programs have a thirteen and five-
2 tenths percent faculty vacancy rate, and on average,
3 twenty-five percent of all nursing faculty will retire within
4 five years; and

5 WHEREAS, salaries for associate degree nursing faculty
6 averaged forty-four thousand four hundred sixty-two dollars
7 (\$44,462) in 2007 compared to a community equivalent salary of
8 seventy-one thousand five hundred dollars (\$71,500) for an
9 associate degree nurse; the salary for a full-time masters of
10 science nursing faculty was seventy-six thousand four hundred
11 dollars (\$76,400) compared to a comparably educated clinical
12 nurse in the community of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000)
13 during the same time period; and

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

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

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

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1 admission; and

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

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

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

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

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study identify the funding
22 that would be necessary to hire and retain an adequate number
23 of nursing faculty at public colleges and universities; the
24 number of qualified applicants who are turned away or put on
25 waiting lists for admission to nursing schools; the factors

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1 that would entice current faculty facing retirement to remain
2 on the faculty; the factors that would entice nurses who have
3 retired from clinical practice to join the faculty of nursing
4 schools; and other factors that are determinants of the success
5 of a school of nursing at educating a sufficient number of
6 nurses to meet the demand in the state; and

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

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

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and
16 recommendations of this study be presented to the interim
17 legislative health and human services committee by November 1,
18 2009; and

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