

AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 REGULAR SESSION

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO
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(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Date Prepared: January 21 2026 **Check all that apply:**
Bill Number: SB 11 **Original** **Correction**
Amendment **Substitute**

Sponsor: Sen. Linda Lopez **Agency Name**
Short Title: NURSE LOAN REPAYMENT **and Code Number:** University of New Mexico-952
Title: ACT **Person Writing** Kelly O'Donnell
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
	(\$5,000)	non	SGF
	\$5,000	non	Nurse Loan Repayment Fund

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total						

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis:

Senate Bill 11 enacts the Nurse Loan Repayment Act and authorizes the Higher Education Department (HED) to administer a nurse loan repayment program to improve nurse supply in designated underserved areas and support nurse faculty/preceptors in New Mexico.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

A dedicated, nursing-specific repayment program has the potential to create a clearer, more direct lane of access for nurses seeking loan forgiveness. If implemented well, it could materially support recruitment and retention in designated underserved areas and strengthen the faculty/preceptor pipeline that enables enrollment capacity.

This legislation applies to nurses licensed as registered nurses or licensed practical nurses pursuant to the Nursing Practice Act. APRNs are generally RNs with advanced practice authorization and thus should be eligible for the loan repayment program. However, language affirming the eligibility of APRNs and nurse midwives for the newly created program could reduce ambiguity.

Ensuring that graduate nursing degrees qualify for loan repayment is particularly important given the recent federal changes to graduate borrowing limits for graduate nursing degrees.

Maximum repayment amounts will not be sufficient to cover the repayment of nursing debt, particularly for students who obtain graduate degrees. According to NerdWallet (https://www.nerdwallet.com/student-loans/learn/average-nursing-student-debt?utm_source=chatgpt.com) As of 2024, **federal** student loan debt for (completed) nursing degrees averaged:

Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN): \$23,302
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN): \$28,917
Master of Science in Nursing (MSN): \$49,047

Because the bill limits eligible debt to certain education loans and excludes categories such as scholarships, personal loans, and loans exceeding standard school expense levels, the program may not fully offset increased reliance on higher-cost private financing if federal graduate borrowing limits constrain nursing students' access to federal loans.

Committee composition is a strength of this bill. Including HCA, DOH, the Board of Nursing, and notably the dean of the New Mexico College of Nursing that graduates the most nurses helps ensure the program stays grounded in workforce realities and educational pipeline constraints.

Including faculty and preceptors addresses the clinical education pipeline, which is critical to scaling and sustaining our nursing workforce.

SB 11 requires quarterly reporting in recipient contracts and extensive annual cohort/program reporting by HED. It is important that the reporting expectations be clear, manageable, and purposeful so the program does not become difficult to administer or navigate.

The definition of “standard expense levels” will help to determine how effective this bill is as a hedge against recent federal borrowing-category changes.

HED’s Minority Doctoral Loan Repayment Assistance Program is a separate loan repayment program aimed at eligible faculty at New Mexico public colleges/universities. If this bill were enacted, some individuals (nurse faculty/preceptors) would be eligible for both, creating a potential ambiguity around “double benefit” rules, which HED would need to resolve administratively.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The bill creates a nurse loan repayment fund but does not appear to authorize that fund to receive recoveries (money paid back) by nurses who fail to comply with repayment terms.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

ALTERNATIVES

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

AMENDMENTS

Clarify that eligibility of advanced practice nurses and nurse midwives.