

NURSING SHORTAGE CONTINUES

Nursing is the single largest health care profession in the United States with 4.2 million registered nurses. In New Mexico, the Board of Nursing reports today we have 32,794 licensed Registered Nurses (RNs) with 17,759 who actually practice here. RNs perform a variety of patient care duties and are critical to the delivery of health care services in a variety of settings. Plainly said you don't have a hospital or a clinic or home health agency without nurses.

ISSUES:

- New Mexico's Workforce Solutions in May of 2023 indicated advertised job openings for RNs totaled **6,523**.
- When we add critical care nurses & acute care nurses, we increase the above number by 388 for a total of **6,911**.
- Nationally 55% of RNs are over the age of 50.
- In 2029 the last of the baby boomer generation will reach retirement age – resulting in a population of over 71 million people over 65 and older baby boomer RNs finally retiring.
- Over 1 million RNs in the U.S. will leave the workforce by 2030.
- Only 14.8% of RNs in the U.S. are under 30 years old.
- Nationally 13% of newly licensed RNs change their jobs away from nursing after only one year.
- According to Zippia Research in June of 2023 – in 2022 New Mexico had the biggest hospital staffing shortages in the United States. Half of all hospitals in NM report RN staffing shortages.
- New Mexico Schools of Nursing currently have capacity limitations, clinical placement issues, lack of funding for student support and lack of faculty (often salary related).
- New Mexico public colleges and universities rarely expand their programs without additional funding from the state.
- Recently Schools of Nursing have experienced a declining number of applicants.

NUMBERS:

Schools of Nursing RN Students:

Category	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Applicants	2566	2617	2749	2683	2554
Admitted	1408	1489	1611	1386	1691
Graduated	1084	1027	1128	1125	1289

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

In July of 2020, the Program Evaluation Unit of LFC released their analysis of two decades of increased funding to the state schools of nursing. During that period of time, \$120 million cumulative was invested in order to increase the number of people with nursing degrees. These targeted expansion appropriations since FY12 contributed to growth of 141% greatly increasing the number of licensed nurses in the state.

In FY22, the Legislature appropriated \$15 million in ARPA fund to the Higher Education Department for schools of nursing to apply for funds in order to expand the number of nursing education slots. Money could also be used for equipment and updated training sites.

In addition, in FY22 the legislature appropriated \$30 million in nonrecurring funding for endowed faculty teaching positions in nursing programs in state and tribal colleges.

In FY 23, the legislature appropriated an additional \$10 million of nonrecurring funds for endowed faculty teaching positions in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs in state and tribal colleges. In both appropriations, schools must not use this money to supplant current institutional funding for faculty.

Also, in FY23, as promised, approximately \$9 million became recurring within the RPSF line items of each college and university. This ongoing funding was projected to have increased the number of nursing slots by approximately 400.

WHY HIGHER EDUCATION IS CENTRAL TO ENDING NURSING SHORTAGES

There is no quick and easy solution to fixing the nursing shortage.

The nursing shortage cannot be solved unless higher education institutions educate more nurses. This requires the State of New Mexico to make continuing investments in our state and tribal schools of nursing.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

Infuse \$10 million recurring funding into the schools of nursing through the program enhancement fund at the Higher Education Department. Allow that funding to expand the number of nursing slots by hiring new faculty, increasing faculty salaries, supporting student mentoring and tutoring, funding travel and lodging for student clinical rotations, providing other assistance to students as needed and funding clinical faculty and preceptors.

Fund and create a statewide media campaign to attract students to become nurses.

Assist schools of nursing in clinical placement by utilizing software to coordinate all the clinical placements throughout the state.

Pass a Preceptor tax credit to support volunteer preceptors.

WHOSE JOB IS IT TO ADDRESS THE HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE CRISIS?