

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HM 61

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .199318.1

Short Title: School Nurse Task Force

Sponsor(s): Representative Yvette Herrell

Analyst: James Ball

Date: March 4, 2015

Bill Summary:

HM 61 requests that the secretaries of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Public Education Department (PED) convene a school nurse task force to:

- propose school nurse staffing models in schools and make other recommendations;
- include representatives from:
 - the Board of Nursing;
 - school nurses;
 - the New Mexico School Superintendents Association;
 - the New Mexico School Boards Association; and
 - other appropriate health care providers.
- make recommendations addressing any possible disparities caused by a lack of nursing services to students; and
- develop a plan by October 1, 2015 to address those disparities.

HM 61 further resolves that copies of the memorial be transmitted to the secretaries of DOH and PED.

Fiscal Impact:

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

Substantive Issues

Among its points, HM 61 states that:

- for many students, the school nurse is the only healthcare provider a student visits;
- school nurses deal with major health issues, including asthma, allergies, obesity, and diabetes, emergency administration of medication, medication management, disaster preparedness, crisis management, immunizations, mental health, oral health, visual health, school wellness policies, violence and bullying;

- school nurses also coordinate and manage the health needs of special education students;
- the New Mexico school health manual recommends that school health programs provide opportunities for all students to develop health behaviors;
- PED rules require support service programs that include health services provided by PED-licensed registered nurses;
- new DOH rules establish standards for the administration of emergency medications in schools; and
- currently, only 21 school districts have one part-time nurse per district, and four school districts have no nurse.

The Higher Education Department notes that, in addition to a shortage of nurse practitioners, New Mexico has a shortage of nursing instructors. Because most nurses in New Mexico have only an associate degree, most are not qualified to teach. Expanding Nurse Educator Fund recipient eligibility to assist these nurses in attaining higher degrees could help to increase the number of nursing instructors and thereby increase the number of nurse practitioners in the state.

DOH emphasizes that New Mexico's nursing shortage is worse than the national average — approximately one-third of New Mexico's nurses are at or above retirement age.

Committee Referrals:

HHC/HEC

Related Bills:

HB 121 *Use of Nurse Educators Fund*

SB 341 *Use of Nurse Educators Fund for Degree*