

## Armijo, Alicia, HED

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**From:** Julia Ruetten <jruetten@NMHSC.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 10, 2023 9:42 AM  
**To:** Info, HigherEd, HED  
**Cc:** tclark@nmhsc.com  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] HPLRP proposed rule comment letter from NMHA  
**Attachments:** 5.7.3 NMAC HPLRP Comment Letter\_NMHA\_final.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Good morning,

On behalf of the New Mexico Hospital Association, and its President and CEO, Troy Clark, please find attached our comment letter regarding the proposed rule changes to 5.7.3 NMAC – Health Professional Loan Repayment Program.

If there are any questions regarding our comments please reach out to Troy or me.

Thank you,  
Julia

**Julia Ruetten**  
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**SENT VIA EMAIL**

April 10, 2023

New Mexico Higher Education Department  
2044 Galisteo Street, Suite 4  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Sent to [HigherEd.Info@state.nm.us](mailto:HigherEd.Info@state.nm.us)

***RE: Proposed Amendments – 5.7.3 NMAC – New Mexico Health Professional Loan Repayment Program***

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of our 47 New Mexico hospital members and the thousands of dedicated New Mexicans they employ, the New Mexico Hospital Association submits for your consideration the following comments regarding the proposed amendments to 5.7.3 NMAC – New Mexico Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (“proposed amendments”).

We fully support the proposed amendments. The clarification that registered nurses are eligible for the program aligns with legislative intent and, according to the Higher Education Department’s (“Department”) website, with how the program is currently administered. The most recent data available shows that all counties, except for Bernalillo, are below national benchmarks for the number of registered nurses and clinical nurse specialists; and that the state needs an additional 5,800 nurses to meet demand.<sup>1</sup> We support legislative and administrative actions that bolster the efforts of our members to recruit and retain nurses in our state – and we consider this proposed rule to be one of those important actions.

Additionally, the proposal for 36 hours to be considered full-time aligns with how many hospitals schedule clinicians and would allow those providers to remain eligible for the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP). The change would be a valuable update to the rule.

The Health Professional Loan Repayment Program is an important, but limited, tool for our member hospitals in underserved communities to recruit and retain urgently needed healthcare providers. As the Department is aware, demand for the program well outpaces

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<sup>1</sup> New Mexico Health Care Workforce Committee. 2022 Annual Report. Albuquerque NM: University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, 2022.

available funding. In the current fiscal year only 44 eligible applicants – 14 percent – were given new awards due to limited funding. We are hopeful that the substantial appropriation increase for the HPLRP included in the General Appropriation Act of 2023 will prove to be impactful for many more eligible applicants and we applaud legislators and the Governor for prioritizing the funding.

We appreciate the efforts of the Department to draft these proposed amendments and the opportunity to share our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at [tclark@nmhsc.com](mailto:tclark@nmhsc.com).

Sincerely,



Troy Clark  
President and CEO