

## Armijo, Alicia, HED

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**From:** Julia Ruetten <jruetten@NMHSC.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 15, 2026 11:07 AM  
**To:** Info, HigherEd, HED  
**Cc:** Troy Clark  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] 5.7.3 NMAC proposed rule - comment letter from NM Hospital Association  
**Attachments:** 5.7.3 proposed rule NMHA comment letter\_final.pdf

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Good afternoon,

Attached please find the New Mexico Hospital Association's comment letter on the proposed rule 5.7.3 NMAC NEW MEXICO HEALTH PROFESSIONAL LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (HPLRP) (repeal and replacement). Please reach out with any questions.

Thank you,

Julia

**Julia Ruetten**

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**SENT VIA EMAIL to HigherEd.Info@hed.nm.gov**

May 15, 2026

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

***Re: Proposed Rule 5.7.3 NMAC – NEW MEXICO HEALTH PROFESSIONAL LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM***

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of our 48 New Mexico hospital members and the thousands of physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals they employ, I am writing in support of the proposed amendments to 5.7.3 NMAC. We appreciate the agency's efforts to develop these proposed rules quickly, and we are optimistic that the changes to the NM Health Professional Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP) made in House Bill 66, along with the Legislature's \$25 million appropriation to increase awards, will strengthen healthcare workforce recruitment and retention across the state.

We are disappointed that the proposed rule removes lawful permanent residents from eligibility for participation in the program, though we understand this change aligns the rule with the HPLRP statute. We hope the Legislature will consider amending the law in the future to allow lawful permanent residents to participate, as they are an important part of the state's healthcare workforce.

We offer the following comments for consideration as the rule is finalized:

1. It is unclear whether participants must reapply each year they remain eligible for the program, or whether acceptance into the program includes participation for the full three- or four-year term, as long as the participant continues to meet all eligibility requirements. Additional clarification on this point would support recruitment efforts by ensuring the program is presented accurately to prospective employees.
2. Section 5.7.3.9(D) – Applicant Eligibility: Both the current and proposed rules define full-time employment as at least 36 hours per week. We recommend moving to an annual hours-worked standard to align with the NM Rural Health Care Practitioner Tax Credit Program, which defines full-time employment as at least 1,584 hours per year and part-time employment as at least 792 hours but less than 1,583 hours annually (see § 7-2-18.22 NMSA 1978). This approach would also better align with the proposed shift from a quarterly to an annual repayment schedule.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposed rule. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can provide additional information or clarification.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Troy Clark'.

Troy Clark  
President and CEO