

floor, where it passed with overwhelming support, 35-0, just before the legislative session concluded.

With the legislative process complete, the final step was securing the Governor's signature. NMSNA Legislative Chair sent a formal letter of support both by email and registered USPS mail, followed by a statewide campaign encouraging school nurses to call the Governor's Office asking for the governor to support the bill. On April 10, 2025, Governor Lujan

Grisham signed HB0195 into law.

This success was made possible by the tireless efforts of many, including Representative Joy Garratt and Senator Natalie Figueroa; Government Relations consultants Linda Siegle and Gloria Doherty; and dedicated NMSNA members such as Joshua Landry (Legislative Chair), Elizabeth Dickson, Myrna Barbee-Lee, Barbara Wheeler, and NMSNA President Shawna Bailey. Countless others contributed along the way.

HB0195- School Nurse Salary Tiers and Minimums formally establishes pay parity for school nurses in New Mexico, aligning their compensation with teachers and granting annual stipends for national certification. This legislation not only corrects long-standing disparities in school nurse compensation but also strengthens the pipeline for recruiting and retaining qualified professionals dedicated to student health and wellness. ■

Creating Practice Parameters for the New Mexico Nursing Community

Deborah Walker, MSN, RN and Gloria Doherty, PhD, RN

April 8, 2025, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed HB178, Amendments to the New Mexico Nursing Practice Act. NMNA greatly appreciates the Governor's action for what we believe will serve the nursing community in the State to practice to the full extent of their education and training, to move forward and to provide safe, quality care for patients in our State.

What led to this? Due to efforts of the New Mexico Nurses Association (NMNA), our New Mexico Nursing Practice Act does not go through sunset review as experienced in many states. Additionally, it is rare that professional nursing associations in the State seek legislators who will open the Act for changes. Indeed, the forward thinking of the associations has provided a statute that serves nurses and the public over time. Nevertheless, the nursing community identifies changes that are necessitated as practice parameters and the profession evolve.

The New Mexico Nurses Association convenes representatives and leadership from the professional nursing associations annually, during the interim. These

meetings are designed for the associations to discuss their legislative priorities and needs well in advance of the beginning of a legislative session. These meetings allow for the associations to support respective initiatives and ensure that the community of nursing is "swimming in the same direction." Issues are resolved prior to the introduction of legislation so the nursing community is cohesive. Strategies are determined.

The language for the bill was negotiated during the interim with the professional nursing associations in New Mexico including NMNA, the New Mexico Nurse Practitioner Council (NMPC), members of the NM Chapter of the American College of Nurse Midwives, the NM Native American Indian Nurses Association, and the NM Association of Nurse Anesthetists. The NM Board of Nursing was consulted regularly throughout this process.

The legislation was sponsored by Representative Doreen Gallegos* with Senator Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics carrying the bill when it passed over into the Senate. NMNA recognizes the skill of these

two legislators and thanks them for their sponsorship, efforts, and commitment to the nursing profession. Additionally, the lobbyists for NMNA (and the NM Nurse Practitioner Council) were stellar. The skill of Linda Siegle with the assistance of Gloria Doherty cannot be understated during the hard-fought process to get this bill passed.

To put the success of passage into a context:

- 1190 bills were introduced
- 202 passed both the House and the Senate
- 195 bills were sent to the Governor
- 135 were signed into law

Finally, multiple RNs and APRNs worked in coordination with our associations to advocate for the bill; their advocacy was a third tier that proved invaluable.

Of note, the law serves to:

- clarify that RNs have a role in sedation when practicing under the order of an MD or other prescriber;
- allow the Board of Nursing to waive the initial licensure fee for new gradu-

- allows of our NM programs of nursing;
- allow the individual RN to choose to have either a single state or multi-state nursing license;
- create a new category of retired nurse license; and designate an inactive reserve category of nurses for activation in a declared emergency
- allow for the promulgation of rules for use of Artificial Intelligence (AI);
- remove an antiquated administrative burden for certified nurse practitioners and certified clinical nurse specialists to submit a formulary with initial licensure and renewal;

- define APRNs for the first time in statute;
- ensure the NM nursing data collected by the NM BON is owned by the Board;
- allow the NM BON to develop and maintain a system that assists all schools of nursing in the coordination of pre-licensure clinical placements; and
- provide updates to nomenclature that match national verbiage.

The law will take effect on July 1, 2025, and rulemaking will be a process

we hope the community of nursing will embrace. ■

*Co-sponsors of HB 178:

Representatives:

Pamelya Herndon
D. Wonda Johnson
Janelle Anyanonu
Daya Hochman-Vigil
Cynthia Borrego
Mark Duncan
Yanita Gurrola
Jennifer Jones
Senator Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics

Student Nurse Confirmed as Representative for WNMU Board of Regents

Deborah Walker, MSN, RN

On March 17, 2025, Keana Richelle Huerta, a Level 2 nursing student at WNMU, appeared before the Senate Rules Committee regarding her appointment as the Student Regent for the Western New Mexico University Board of Regents. Senator Ramos, her Senate sponsor, introduced her, noting that she was born and raised in Hurley in Grant County, served as a city councilwoman—appointed during her senior year of high school and elected the following year—and is a member of the Silver City Kiwanis. The Senator also spoke about Ms. Huerta's passion for music, sharing that she is a local recording artist. Later, other Senators noted that she is currently the only woman serving on the Board.

During her hearing, Huerta addressed

the effects of recent controversies at the University on students.

"Right now, it's an unprecedented and weird time. It's weird on campus... Me and many others have a vision for Western and its greatness. It's unfortunate right now to see whole groups on campus unsure if they're able to make it into the next fiscal year with how we're headed."

She told the Committee:

"I hate that my university is going through that, and I hope my presence here will give the university ease that we're headed in the right direction. We just need that presence of honesty and surety to make sure that our campus stays right."

In preparation for this article, she

highlighted her time as a councilwoman in her hometown. She asked that we specify that after being elected in November 2023, she served in the role until January 2025.

She shared, "My time in local government has been an important part of my journey and helped me become more immersed in community service and leadership."

Huerta was voted out of Senate Rules 7-0 and, along with others that day, was confirmed unanimously by the NM Senate. Her term will end on December 31, 2026.

Readers may go to the [NMlegis.gov](https://www.nmlegis.gov) site and view her hearing before Senate Rules in its entirety. ■