NMNAINA Student Success Program

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Since 2017, the New Mexico Native American Indian Nurses Association (NMNAINA) Student Success Program has focused on three goals:

1. Increase graduation rates among Native American nursing students attending New Mexico nursing programs.
2. Support graduates in successfully passing the NCLEX-RN licensure examination.
3. Retain Native nurses within the New Mexico workforce.

Nationally, American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) students experience lower rates of postsecondary degree attainment than other racial and ethnic groups. In 2022, only 33% of AIAN adults who had attended postsecondary education had completed an associate degree or higher, the lowest completion rate among major racial and ethnic groups (Congressional Research Service, 2024).

NMNAINA Student Success Program Results (2017-2026)

Over the past 10 years, NMNAINA has mentored 147 Native nursing students with the following results:

- 126 students graduated from New Mexico-accredited nursing programs (93% graduation rate).
- 100% of graduates passed the NCLEX-RN examination.
- All 126 graduates are currently employed in New Mexico.
- 16 students remain enrolled in nursing programs.
- 5 students withdrew from their nursing programs (7% attrition rate), primarily during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These outcomes, compared to national data demonstrating lower completion rates among Native students, support research showing that mentoring programs improve retention, graduation, and NCLEX success (Campaign for Action, 2025).

The NMNAINA is proud of its partnership with the New Mexico Board of Nursing, whose funding has made this program possible. The association looks forward to continuing its work mentoring future nurses, supporting NCLEX success, and strengthening New Mexico's nursing workforce. ■

References

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Liability Risks for Correctional Health Nurses

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Correctional health nurses practice in unique settings with unique challenges. Incarcerated individuals are entitled to quality, unbiased care; however, they live within a highly restricted environment and often have complex physiological and psychosocial conditions. Loss of freedom and privacy, combined with cramped and unfamiliar living quarters, can initiate or exacerbate these conditions, complicating care delivery. In addition, correctional nurses must balance their respect for patient privacy with the safety of guards and other prisoners.

These are some of the factors that have likely contributed to the heightened attention to correctional health nurse liability. Claims against nurses in this specialty have increased in recent years, according to a 2026 report from NSO and CNA. The percentage of correctional facilities involved in closed claims rose from 4.4% in 2020 to 6.2% in 2025. Over the same time, the average total cost incurred for closed claims increased from $219,924 to $262,272. Areas at particular risk of liability include failure to treat, delayed urgent care, and failure to respond to mental health issues, such as the risk of suicide.

Fortunately, correctional health nurses can reduce their risk. This effort requires understanding key concepts of incarceration and healthcare delivery, the impact of documentation gaps on legal defense, and the nature of the correctional health practice environment. Once nurses have a firm grasp of these areas, they can take steps to protect themselves.

Incarceration concepts

An incarcerated person's right to quality care is embedded in the U.S. Constitution: