



NEW MEXICO FIRST

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**Nursing forums call for creating community action teams
to address the nursing shortage**

*Communities also want to work in collaboration with a state action team to
move recommendations for nursing education forward.*

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, October 14, 2008—Creating community action teams to address the nursing shortage throughout New Mexico and increasing funding to expand nursing education were just a few of the ideas participants discussed at six regional forums held from June through September, 2008. The one-day events, attended by 135 citizens resulted in establishing ownership of the 52 recommendations that had been made for nursing education, recruitment, and retention as well as indentifying the top priority recommendations to be moved forward at the state level.

The regional forums titled "Moving from Talk to Action: Building Community Plans for a Strong Nursing Workforce," were held in the communities of Albuquerque, Roswell, Clovis, Las Cruces, Gallup and Espanola. The forums brought together a wide range of citizens from 24 communities in New Mexico. They came from rural and urban areas and involved nurses, nursing administrators and educators, community leaders, and state policymakers; each with the common goal to determine how the recommendations already on the table could be moved from talk to action.

"I am excited about the concept of developing community action teams," said Patricia Boyle, Executive Director for the New Mexico Center for Nursing Excellence. "The nursing shortage impacts each community in unique ways. Community action teams, in concert with a state-level action group, will have a significant impact on address nursing issues."

"The Board of Nursing is very excited about taking the issues down to the grassroots level in order to come up with viable solutions particular to New Mexico," said Allison Kozeliski, Executive Director for the New Mexico Board of Nursing. "The board is committed to providing support to those efforts that will serve to increase the supply of nurses in our state as well as enhance the professional practice of nursing."

"We had a fantastic group of committed citizens at these regional forums," said Charlotte Pollard, New Mexico First Deputy Director. "They recognized that local communities can have a tremendous impact on attracting and preparing young people for careers in nursing and on nursing job satisfaction once employed."

In addition to the creation of community action teams, participants at the forums identified the following priorities for state action:

- Increase and add funding for nursing education programs to the general budget.
- Expand nursing education programs.
- Increase stipend and number of loan-for-service programs and tie to masters programs.
- Develop funding formula for nursing faculty to increase baseline salaries.
- Make Nurse Education Fund permanent and recurring and establish criteria for disbursement of funds.

Action teams comprised of volunteers from the events will take the recommendations identified as appropriate for the local communities to local leaders and employers in the hopes of implementing some, if not all, of the recommendations. A full report on the results of the regional forums has been release and can be found at www.nmfirst.org.

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