



Taos Municipal Schools
Health Services
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TO: Mr. Roberto “Bobby” Gonzales
Superintendent

FROM: Maria Chavez Medina RN, BSN

DATE: July 10, 2009

REGARDING: IDEAS Report

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Mr. Gonzales, this is in response to the recent report that was made public by IDEAS.

I am responding to the Health Services portion of the report. When I met with Ms. Lilli Segre, she presented herself in a very polite manner and wrote everything I was telling her. We met in my small cramped space I call my office that I share with another nurse (which incidentally is being made smaller because another individual needs our nurses’ space) however, this is yet another issue to contend with.

Ms, Segre and I met in the presence of nurse Phyllis. I told her that I am the Health Services Coordinator and I also serve in a nursing capacity because we are short nurses. She reassured me that my program was fine she described the “three legged stool as being “sturdy, that we did not need “fixing”. I am surprised

by the inconsistencies in her report. I have four nurses under my supervision not five as she states in her report. I am the ONLY administrator who serves dual roles. Yes, I did mention to her that I did not have time to visit the other nurses because when I'm at the high school which is every day, I see students all day long. Since the new nurse was hired in February, she helps me at the high school two and half days a week. The previous nurse that was at the high school before did not do any of the screenings therefore, the new nurse had to assume that late in the year. I assisted her by caring for the ill and injured students while she did the screenings and helped her screen in addition to my reports, meetings and all supervisory duties that I have. I resent that Ms. Segre did not say that in her report but turned it around and stated that I do nothing. I conduct nurses meetings and trainings in addition to conducting trainings for the staff and students. If you read the Albuquerque Journal a couple of weeks ago the Department of Health publicly thanked all the nurses in New Mexico for our active role in the HINI Virus Pandemic. You were here already, you asked Rose to work with me in developing a plan which I did myself then presented it to you in time for the board meeting that night.

I set high standards for myself and my nurses. I conduct myself in a manner of respect and trust worthy. I have accomplished many goals while working at the Taos Municipal Schools. You were still here when I took on the challenge of setting up the School Based Health Centers. I wrote the grants to get it established, because when I first started we did not have full service. I got the pharmacy license, TitleX for the family planning, the medicaid grant and managed them as well. It was much work so I hired a coordinator to assist me.

The new coordinator did not want to follow the Taos Municipal Schools rules and had her own ideas of running the clinics so we lost the medicaid funding. I accepted the blame and responsibility for it. However, I am happy that I was able to get it set up for the students. I also wrote the Tobacco grant but again, the coordinator I hired did not follow school rules, I called her on it, and she filed a grievance on me and she was placed under Rose just as the SBHCs.

Going back to the report, the recommendation of doing away with the Health Services Coordinator is absurd. Will the principals take on the reporting and compliance issues that are necessary to maintain Health Services for the students? Do they really understand health standards? Aren't we taking a step backwards? As it is two of the nurses are on PIPs for not following standards and as I clean out files, I am finding many documentation inconsistencies. An example, nurses giving over the counter medication without documentation of vital signs or written parental consent.

We abide by the New Mexico Department of Health School Nurse Manual. As nurses, if we do not document, and follow the mandates of the manual, we are held liable not only by DOH and PED, but by the New Mexico Board of Nursing. The Taos Municipal Schools are held liable as well.

If you remember hearing about the incident of the "blue slushies" back in December of 2003, I saved the TMS a tremendous amount of liability because of my quick action and coordination as I pulled the nurses and staff together and we treated all the students involved, I stayed late at the schools documenting everything that we did and then I drove to the hospital and checked on all the students there and talked to the parents. Dr. Space wrote me a commendation

letter for the manner in which I conducted myself and during the meeting with the parents after the incident.

A supervisor working out of Arroyos del Norte School cannot adequately perform the responsibilities of policy and the overall responsibilities associated with the position. I was at Arroyos Del Norte, it was too difficult to attend to meetings and other supervisory issues from there and that is why the new nurse was placed there.

The Department of Health recommends that the nurse to student ratio is 1 nurse /750 students. Ms. Segre contradicts herself when she states on the report on one line that “one nurse at the high school is insufficient to meet the NASN recommended minimum ratio”. Then she goes on to say that the School Based health Centers are there at the high school and middle school to meet those needs when in reality the SBHC are NOT the same and do NOT provide the same services as the school nurses! They see students on appointment basis, they do not take on the role of the school nurse and they see students that the school nurses refer only after the students have been evaluated by a nursing exam.

The SBHC do not do immunizations/ or immunization surveillance screenings, participate in IEPs, SATs, 504s, etc. They are a clinic with a nurse practitioner and mental health providers to follow up on the school nurse referrals and other school referrals. If the nurses were here for bandaids and ice packs only, we could get away with CPR, First Aid Certified secretaries.

The reality of not having a full time school nurse at Arroyos is the funding but the nurse was given another half day there on Wednesdays and they have early dismissal on that day. ADNE have on staff a certified First aid/ CPR teacher who

is more than glad to be of assistance on the days the nurse is not there.

The Enos Garcia school nurse chooses not to enter immunization information on STI. I will personally go there and enter two days this year to help bring her up to date. She complains of all the work but I began my school nursing job there and I was able to complete all my deadlines on a timely manner and still manage to see students and staff , collaborate with parents, physicians and other agencies, and serve on committees. Yes it can be done with one nurse!

As far as my salary is concerned, I am the third to the lowest on the pay scale considering my credentials, experience and my dedication. I can be earning \$60,000 /year at Holy Cross Hospital working three twelve hour shifts per week with not the responsibilities and liabilities that I face at the Taos Municipal Schools on a daily basis. Especially being responsible for the some of the nurses who at times display a non-chalant attitude towards their work and students. How dare Ms. Segre talk about me like that! How dare she question my integrity and my honor!

Sincerely

Maria Chavez Medina