

# Corruption Runs Rampant in the Martinez Administration

## The Behavioral Health Shakeup Has Real Consequences for New Mexico

Vice-Chair Juan Sanchez III, Apr. 12, 2016

In 2013, Governor Martinez turned New Mexico's behavioral health care system upside down by unjustly suspending payments for 15 providers she accused of fraud before any conclusions of the investigations were drawn.



Photo courtesy of Juan Sanchez III

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The lapse of funding forced 11 of those providers to close their doors, causing disruptions in services to some of our state's most vulnerable residents.

Governor Martinez's solution was to bring five Arizona companies to fill the void. Three of the five Arizona behavioral health providers announced they will no longer provide services in New Mexico. Agave Health Inc. recently announced that they will leave 3,000 patients without support, severely impacting families in our state.

My family was one of those affected by Governor Martinez's senseless choices, when my sister's services abruptly stopped. This first-hand experience is one of the reasons I got involved with the New Mexico Democratic Party—Republicans were wreaking havoc on families across our state, and I wanted to ensure no one else could get hurt by their negligent decisions. New Mexico Democrats are leading the charge to hold Governor Susana Martinez accountable. Majority Leader Michael Sanchez of Valencia County, State Senator Mary Kay Papen of Doña Ana County, State Representative Debbie Armstrong of Bernalillo County, Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino of Bernalillo County are just a

few of our leaders calling for answers and pointing out the clear misuse of power of the governor.

Our Democratic congressional delegation, U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Lujan and Michelle Lujan Grisham, have introduced legislation to ensure due process of law for health care providers. The community is outraged. A strong tide of young leaders involved with Generation Justice are sharing the stories of real people who were affected by Governor Martinez's shakeup. The video testimonies are incredibly moving and remind us that those we elect to office are responsible to their constituents.

Ten of the innocent providers have brought civil rights and breach of contract lawsuits against the Governor's administration. It remains unclear whether any of the long-standing behavioral health providers will be able to offer services ever again. But what is clear is that this shakeup continues to have real consequences for our state, including an economic cost.

When a number of New Mexico's behavioral health providers were forced to close, approximately 1,600 people lost their jobs. It created an atmosphere of uncertainty, which has the potential to deter other health care organizations from opening in our state. The state spent \$28 million to uncover \$1.16 million in overbilling at a time when New Mexico is suffering economically. Actions like these should make us question Republican leadership's ability to create and sustain jobs and make decisions that benefit our state's economy.

As many New Mexicans face an uncertain future, we must demand answers from the Governor. New Mexico deserves to know why Arizona companies were looped in to fill our provider's positions before allegations were brought against them. New Mexico deserves to know why some of our longest standing behavioral and mental health providers were forced to close before investigations were complete. New Mexico deserves to know why 1,600 of our behavioral and mental health professionals were put out of work. New Mexico deserves to know when funds will be restored to all of the providers the Governor accused. New Mexico deserves to know why the Arizona companies, who signed \$17.85 million in contracts with the state, can leave without any repercussions.

Governor Susana Martinez owes New Mexico the truth for putting the interests of out-of-state companies ahead of our communities. This election, let's get involved and make sure we have Democrats in office to hold her accountable.

#### What they said the audit found:

##### 4.6 Key Case File Findings

*PCG's review revealed a provider system in need of technical assistance, especially considering the seismic shift that the state's behavioral health system will undergo with the transition to Centennial Care in January 2014.*

#### What the audit actually found:

##### 4.6 Key Case File Findings

PCG's Case File Audit did not uncover what it would consider to be credible allegations of fraud, nor any significant concerns related to consumer safety. However, PCG's review revealed a provider system in need of technical assistance, especially considering the seismic shift that the state's behavior health system will undergo with the transition to Centennial Care in January 2014.

# Governor Martinez's Health Sciences Takeover Should Concern

## All of Us

Adan J. Serna, Apr. 12, 2016

In a stunning move by Governor Susana Martinez and her political cronies, the Governor Martinez-appointed University of New Mexico Board of Regents approved the dissolution of the board of directors of the UNM Health Sciences Center (HSC), a major blow for transparency and due process. In haste, the regents voted to eliminate crucial oversight positions. Many medical students and professionals, political leaders, and community members are concerned about the direction of HSC as a leading medical center in a time when quality health services are so important to New Mexico.

The sudden takeover of the HSC and the elimination of its community oversight governance leave many wondering – Why do this? What is the importance of the HSC? It seems that the motivation for the governance overhaul is multifaceted. Reports show a main reason was money. The HSC has \$220 million in its reserves dedicated to a new hospital, one that would replace the current UNM hospital which lacks resources and is aging quickly. Earlier in the year, the state Human Services Department (HSD) asked the HSC for \$50 million to cover a Medicaid funding shortfall, according to an HSC administrator in a New Mexico Political Report interview. HSD gave no indication that they would reimburse the health center. Taking \$50 million from HSC would most certainly take away from the new hospital investment, which Governor Martinez opposes despite reports that indicate the current hospital needs updating due to its age and size.

It's important we also understand Governor Martinez's motives to block HSC's new hospital. The new hospital would compete with Lovelace, a for profit hospital and insurance company linked to major contributions made to Martinez's campaign.

The most concerning part of the takeover, however, was the lack of transparency, and how quickly it played out. In a letter addressed to the board of regents, almost 200 UNM faculty members expressed their worries, saying "We write to express our concern with the speed, lack of transparency, and lack of opportunity for faculty and broader community consultation that characterized the decision taken on Monday, March 14, 2016 to change the governance structure of the HSC." Two of the regents who voted against the takeover were not even aware of what was going on until days before the final vote and neither did the majority of the public.

After taking away the oversight of the HSC, regents who were appointed by Governor Martinez created a three regent-member committee to oversee the HSC, none of whom have any medical experience. Now that oversight has been completely taken over, the regents have the ability to restructure HSC funding, and ultimately block the construction of the new hospital, severely limiting HSC from providing up-to-date, quality health services to the community.

This heinous action taken by the Governor Martinez's regents was clearly for personal or political gain, or to appease the governor as her administration struggles with an almost half a billion dollar deficit. As New Mexico continues to rank as one of the worst governed states in the country, this shows the commitment of Governor Martinez's administration to campaign donors, when the focus should be on the needs of New Mexicans.



# 17 year-old Voters Will Have a Voice in the Primaries

Addison Flores-Thorpe, Apr. 12, 2016

Thanks to a bipartisan bill introduced by Las Cruces Democrat Jeff Steinborn and passed by the legislature this year, 17-year-olds will be allowed to vote in the primaries this June.

The state of New Mexico already allows 17-year-olds to fill out voter registration forms, but those forms were not deemed valid until the individual turns 18. Now, voters who will be eligible to vote in the general election will have a voice in who they want to see on the ballot in November. Although these newcomers must be 18 by the time of the general election, it is exciting to see young people getting the opportunity to get involved.

The current Secretary of State, who was appointed by Governor Martinez after Diana Duran resigned due to campaign finance misconduct, has attempted to delay the implementation of the law, blocking the voices of many young people. "We're just waiting for attorneys to give us a definitive answer 'yes' and tell us when and how we deal with it," Ken Ortiz, chief of staff in Secretary of State Brad Winter's office told the Albuquerque Journal.

The law takes effect May 18, eight days after early voting for the primary begins in county clerk's offices.

Those who are 17 and wish to vote in the primaries must

register to vote by May 10, the deadline for all voters to be registered for the primary. However, they will only be allowed to vote in the primaries, and not other elections like bond elections.

One of the most important rights of American citizens is the right to vote—the right to have a say in who our leaders are and how our government should work. Democrats have been working hard to ensure this right is protected and accessible, and this election is the time for young people to get involved and make their voices heard.



Photo courtesy of [www.flickr.com/theresathompson](http://www.flickr.com/theresathompson)

## Dem of the week: Scott Krahling

Sonia Gonzalez, Apr. 12, 2016



Scott Krahling is running for County Clerk in Doña Ana County. Krahling, with his experience as chief deputy County Clerk, along with his passion for democracy, is certainly qualified to serve his community in this position. He has a vision of his community becoming more active in elections. It's clear from the following interview that Scott

Krahling is committed to protect every vote and has a plan of action to engage voters in Doña Ana County.

### Why is the County Clerk position important?

The County Clerk's office provides access to self-government in two important ways. First, we are on the front lines of democracy. It is our job to make sure elections are fair for all voters and that the results are trustworthy. Second, we empower people with good information as they make important decisions. We record important historical documents and other public documents that help people make good decisions about their future.

### What experience do you bring to the table?

In 2008, I was elected to the Doña Ana County Board of County Commissioners. The highlight of my time on the commission was to prevent gerrymandering in our district. My priority was to protect the principle of one-person one vote, and that fair boundaries were drawn. Ultimately, I knew my vote would lead to losing my elected position as commissioner, but I knew it was the right thing to do. It was this hard fought victory where I gained a greater sense of serving my community and solidified my commitment to make a difference. In January 2013, I was hired in the Clerk's office as the Supervisor of Elections. Immediately, I began to administer every local election from school board elections to large primary and general elections. In a short time, I was promoted to Chief Deputy Clerk, the position I hold today.

As Chief Deputy Clerk, I have had the opportunity to lead with my vision to increase access to voting and engage people to participate in democracy. I have overseen a statewide recount, prioritized community outreach including creating an Election Advisory Council comprised of a diverse group of residents, initiating strategic planning, focusing on professional staff development, and providing excellent customer service.

### APRIL 13

National Delegate Selection Training - Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, Las Cruces

(6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.)

### APRIL 14

National Delegate Selection Training - Carlsbad and Rio Rancho

(5:45 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.)

### APRIL 14

Eddy County Democrats Monthly Meeting

(6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.)

### APRIL 16

New Mexico Federation of Democratic Women Spring Fling Convention - Grants, NM

Details to follow

For more info go to [www.dpnm.net](http://www.dpnm.net)

I am also a member of the Election Center National Association for Election Officials, plus have served on multiple local boards and committees. Experience matters when holding position of County Clerk, because we are administrating fair elections and providing access to public records.

### **How do you plan to get voters engaged?**

As County Clerk, I will be committed to increasing voter engagement and strengthening the voting culture across the county. Our low participation rate demands new and innovative ideas that result in a lasting impact in voter participation for all people in our community.

First, I will work to increase community outreach by taking registration directly to the people. We have recognized that together we can do more to remind people why voting matters. Our outreach efforts have resulted in over 300 newly registered voters in the first 3 months of this year. Second, I have developed an outreach plan that specifically targets youth in our community. Partnering with our public schools, students will get lessons on the process and value of voting. My goal is to have every qualified student registered to vote before graduation. By doing so, we are building a voting culture in our community means that everyone votes because everyone's future matters.

### **How will voter turnout in Doña Ana county impact this year's general election?**

Voter turnout will be important everywhere in this year's general election. The impact in Doña Ana County goes beyond the act of voting. When we vote, we are voting for the things that matter in our future like education, improved wages, infrastructure, and in general, policy that will improve our quality of life. We must inspire people to believe in the power of voting again, because we are not only voting for a better life for us but also for those who cannot vote like our youth and aspiring citizens.

### **Why is being County Clerk in Doña Ana County important to you?**

Public service has been one of my core values my entire life. The County Clerk's office plays a pivotal role in actively engaging citizens, and that is why I have decided to run for County Clerk. I had the opportunity to vote at the age of 18, and I'm ready to create opportunities for others to do the same and share the empowerment I felt when I cast my first vote. My earliest memories are of voting with my mom, and walking door to door with my parents helping local candidates in Albuquerque. In high school and college, I found my passion for American government and in democracy.

Part of my passion for democracy includes a desire to see qualified people in public office. For the County Clerk's office, we need to value people and make decisions from the perspective of the people we serve. Every election administration decision we make is made from the perspective of the voter, because we are all voters too. I am the most qualified person to ensure that we have fair elections for all voters and trustworthy results. I have proven integrity, a wide variety of experience and a vision to build the strongest voting culture possible.