

David Hesley

Dr. David Van Zandt Hesley, DNP, CRNA

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To Whom It May Concern:

As a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist practicing in rural New Mexico, I am writing in strong support of the New Mexico Environment Department's proposed Occupational Heat Standard.

Every summer, healthcare providers witness firsthand the toll extreme heat takes on our communities, particularly among outdoor and low-wage workers who lack basic protections on the job.

This rule is urgently needed to prevent entirely avoidable heat-related illnesses and deaths. In rural areas like mine, access to emergency medical care can be delayed due to geography and resource limitations. That means prevention is not just preferable—it is absolutely critical.

The standard's requirements for written Heat Illness and Injury Prevention Plans (HIIPPs), access to water and shade, acclimatization protocols, and worker training are sound, evidence-based measures that align with best practices in occupational and public health. These are common-sense protections that can and will save lives.

As a healthcare professional, I also strongly support provisions that would:

Require clear emergency response procedures for heat illness;

Educate workers on their rights, including non-retaliation protections;

Ensure training is interactive and meaningful—not just a formality.

This rule is especially important for rural workers, who often have fewer resources, face language barriers, and work in sectors like agriculture, construction, and delivery where heat exposure is constant and severe. These workers are vital to our communities and our economy—they deserve to be protected.

I urge the Department and Environmental Improvement Board to adopt this rule without delay and to resist pressure from industry groups who put profits ahead of worker health. Protecting our workforce is not only a moral obligation—it is essential to the well-being of New Mexico's families, businesses, and healthcare systems.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to worker safety.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Van Zandt Hesley, DNP, CRNA

Española, Rio Arriba County, NM