

**New Mexico Public Education Department  
Options for Parents, Charter Schools Division  
NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUBMIT CHARTER APPLICATION, 2013**

**1. General Information**

- Name of Proposed School

Health Sciences Academy
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- Grade levels to be offered and enrollment projections

Grade Levels to be Offered	Projected Total Enrollment
7-12	500

- Primary Point of Contact

Name	Lorna Samraj			
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**2. Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on the applicant team, and qualifications of the team members to establish a high-quality charter school**

Name	Role on Team	Qualifications: Education, Employment, Experience
Ms. Brenda Avila	Administrative Systems Development, Bi-Lingual Curriculum Development, Media and Communication Design Strategies	Brenda is an articulate and capable spokesperson in promoting bilingual education, online literacy and school reform in Hispanic communities across New Mexico. She was the Assistant Director and a founder of the Escuela Luz del Mundo (a privately funded middle school in Albuquerque, New Mexico). This experience provided her with valuable lessons about the obstacles and challenges of starting a new charter school. Ms. Avila served as an English Language instructor for Georgal in Mexico City, Mexico. She received her Bachelors in Media Arts from the University of New Mexico, and is currently completing a master's degree in Social Documentary. Brenda is a native Spanish speaker.
Ms. Nancy Duhigg	Healthcare Curriculum Development and Design, Marketing Strategies and Parent Communications for Spanish speaking audiences	Ms. Duhigg has been responsible for parent communications and marketing strategy with Hispanic families. She is highly skilled in web design, Autocad, Catia, and MatLab. A graduate of Las Cruces High School, Nancy received her BS degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Engineering Faculty, at UASL, San Luis Potosi, Mexico. Nancy is currently enrolled in a Physician's Assistant graduate program in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
Dr. Andrew Nevins	Development, monitoring and ongoing adaptation and improvement of HAS's Computer Lab, Mathematics,	BS and MS in Computer Science, MIT; PhD Linguistics, MIT. Dr. Nevins has taught college level courses in Brazil, England, Italy and Spain and at Harvard University. Dr. Nevins is a Fulbright Scholar and a recognized expert in the field of distance learning and the use of web based communication in classroom teaching. He is fluent in Spanish, Portuguese and Italian.

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	Physics, and Science Curriculum	Dr. Nevins is well versed in adapting complex mathematical and social science curricula to engage underserved students in high schools. He is well known for his efforts to advise other faculty members in the optimal use of both visual and auditory teaching methods in the classroom and in building student support strategies to enhance online classes and after school remediation in language arts, math and science.
Morgina Rao	As a practicing New Mexico healthcare professional, Ms. Rao will aid in creating additional healthcare partners and ways to create career awareness and health links for students and local community.	Ms. Rao MPH/PA-C, has demonstrated her skills as a practicing physician's assitant across the United States. Currently, Ms. Rao works with Native Americans living in both New Mexico and Arizona. Ms. Rao received her Physician's Assistant and Masters in Public Health degrees from George Washington University, Washington DC. She has a BSc in Organizational Behavior from Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, MD, in addition to a AA, Medical Lab Tech, from Columbia Union College.
Ms. Lorna Samraj	Health Sciences Academy founding team chair; responsible for overall design, curriculum development, and marketing.	Ms. Samraj is President of Healthy Futures, Inc. a 501 (c)(3) New Mexico non profit organization. She also oversees an administrative and educational staff of more than 25 persons at Andele Tutors; her capacity is responsible for assuring curriculum is consistent with NM state educational standards, and assuring high quality and demonstrable results. Previously, Ms. Samraj was Director of Admissions for Canadian University College. She has taught high school and college level English. Ms. Samraj has a BA and MA in English.

3. Model or focus of the proposed school (e.g., performing arts, dual language, college prep, STEM, Montessori, IB):

Health Sciences Academy will emphasize a health science curriculum aligned with the new common core standards and NMPED benchmarks. The proposed school will offer a rigorous college prep program for grades 7-12 with required internships with local healthcare providers in order to augment the curriculum with hands-on experience to enter careers in health related fields.

In addition to the full time day program, Health Sciences Academy plans to offer an evening program for adult community members who have not completed a high school diploma. Day and evening students will follow the same health science focused curriculum and participate in all aspects of the unique health science activities.

4. Does the school expect to contract with another entity for either management, or substantial oversight or direction in the school's operation? Yes:  No:

If YES, describe the entity and the role it will have in the school's operational plan.

N/A

5. Does the applicant team or any members of the team currently operate any other schools? Yes:  No: .

6. If the charter proposal is a replication, identify the school(s) you are replicating and the data that you have that support why this model should be replicated.

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N/A

**7. Vision/Mission statement. (2-3 sentences)**

Our mission is for Health Sciences Academy students to engage in a rigorous, four-year college preparatory curriculum preparing them for college success and health science careers. Health Sciences Academy will proudly offer core curriculum that is blended with health sciences materials, access to dual credit health science courses, and internships with health professionals to enhance the student's educational experience. Our vision is to prepare all students to graduate from the college of their choice, be prepared for jobs in high demand through a laser focus on academic excellence and a culture of success and caring.

**8. Student population and geographical setting of the school**

- Define the targeted geographical area of the proposed school from which you expect to draw a significant number of your students.

Health Sciences Academy will be located within the Gadsden Independent School District in Dona Ana County, New Mexico.

- Describe the targeted student population including key demographic data (academic performance, home languages, ELL, and special education populations).

The target population (Grades 7-12) in the Gadsden Independent School District is best described by the following educational, poverty rate, and demographic benchmarks: of the 14,900 students enrolled in GISD schools, 97% come from Spanish speaking households, and more than 6,000, or 45.6% are classified as living in households below the poverty rate, as compared to the statewide school poverty rate of 23.3%. The most recent census data for Anthony, New Mexico (one of the two largest towns in the school district), shows median household income to be \$25,000, in comparison to the New Mexico statewide average of over \$43,000. The data for Sunland Park, NM is similar.

Gadsden Independent School District, Dona Ana County, New MexicoThe following demographic characteristics of the school district in which Health Sciences Academy will be located is defined by a number of particularly challenging obstacles to student academic success and high school graduation. When compared with the New Mexico State averages, 97% of the 13,600 students are of Hispanic origin as compared to 59% across the state. Most dramatically, 6,150 students are classified as English Language Learners—that is 44% in the school district compared with 14% statewide. Students categorized as having disabilities make up 12% in the school district as compared to the state's 14%. Perhaps most significantly, 100% of the 14,087 students are classified as economically disadvantaged compared to 68% across New Mexico.

With respect to educational attainment, based on AYP scores, none of the district's middle schools, and only one of the district's high schools (the exception is Chaparral High School which is in Corrective Action) have met AYP in reading; indeed, not one of the middle schools, nor any of the three high schools, have reached their AYP goals in math; all other GISD middle and high schools have been classified with an R-2 designation as reported in 2012.

- Identify where these students are most likely being educated currently and why they are expected to choose the proposed charter school for their future educational needs.

Prospective students are current or former students of GISD schools. These schools have reported levels of academic proficiency below state and national norms. As such, both students and parents will seek additional avenues for educating and nurturing children who want to prepare for meaningful careers and successful college pathways and acquire the motivation, self-confidence and tools to assure they will graduate on time. The evening program will attract members of the adult community who wish to complete a high school diploma, and who may also require remedial support in math and English. These

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adult students will be afforded an opportunity to improve their knowledge in health sciences and build language and academic skills in a health career focus. To date there is no health sciences charter school in southern New Mexico to prepare students for high paying careers in health and medical fields; and no other charter school in the region that offers internships and dual credit enrollment at NMSU.

9. Provide evidence that the applicant team has assessed community need for a school of the nature that will be proposed in the application (e.g., objective surveys or other measures of local demand for the proposed educational program).

Demand for workers in healthcare professions, including college bound high school graduates skilled in math and science continue to outpace employment opportunities for other workers. According to the MacArthur Foundation, in the United States medical advances and an aging population have significantly increased the need for healthcare workers; WHO reports the number of nurses migrating to the United States jumped to more than 20,000 last year from about 6,000 in 1983. The US Department of Labor forecasts the demand for pharmacy technicians is expected to increase by 25% through 2018. The New Mexico Department of Labor expected "that from 2006- 2016, health care & social assistance sector is the second fastest growing sector within the economy. In 2006, healthcare employment was 101,610 and is projected to increase to 127,020 by 2016, adding over 25,400 jobs. This represents a 25.0 percent growth rate compared to a national growth rate of about 24 percent. The ambulatory health care services subsector is forecasted to grow from 39,620 jobs in 2006 to 50,790 by 2016, adding 11,170 jobs for a growth rate of 28.2 percent. The social assistance employment is projected to increase by 41.7 percent, increasing from 18,170 jobs." Clearly the healthcare sector will continue to offer well paid high demand careers for qualified workers. Health Sciences Academy curriculum and core values will be shaped to prepare students for these challenging and rewarding jobs.

To date, the Health Sciences Academy team has collected approximately 400 signatures of support from community members in the following local towns: Anthony, Berino, Chaparral, Mesquite, Santa Teresa, Sunland Park, and Vado. We have also received support letters from prospective partner community organizations that include: the Women's Intercultural Center in Anthony, the Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico State University, El Paso Children's Hospital, La Clinical de Familia in Dona Ana County, and the Medical Center of Americas in El Paso. Further, every elected Congressional official in New Mexico has signed a letter of support for this proposed charter school.

10. Identify significant innovative features that the school will implement in order to help it realize its vision / mission (e.g., non-traditional school year, longer school day, partner organizations, etc.).

The first innovative feature of the proposed Health Sciences Academy charter school will be the focus of the academic program on preparing students for graduation and for health science careers, while integrating the new common core standards in classroom instruction and assessment. The second innovative feature is the strategy to partner with local healthcare providers, hospitals and public healthcare clinics in Dona Ana County, to provide students with internships in health science. The third unique feature will be collaborations with community colleges and universities, in order to allow students to take dual enrollment courses in science, math and related healthcare courses.

11. Describe how the school will be more effective than the schools currently serving the targeted student population, and/or plans to improve student achievement and exceed the academic performance of existing public schools in the targeted service area and any data you have to support this assumption.

Health Sciences Academy will be more effective at raising student achievement by offering a longer school day and year, exceeding the state's minimum graduation requirements; providing ongoing outreach to families and the general community; and using a research-based curriculum that combines academic rigor with required internships with practicing healthcare professionals. Health Sciences Academy will embrace a higher set of academic expectations, supported by engaged families as our partners in student success, blending 21st century technology, with traditional classroom instruction, and providing opportunities for real world internships, students enrolled in Health Sciences Academy will exceed the academic performance of their public school cohorts on required NMPED examinations and on quarterly formative assessments.

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As indicated earlier, none of the middle or high schools in the district has met NMPED benchmarks. How then are these students to prepare for challenging careers and college entrance? The vision and mission of Gadsden Academy with a unified approach to building viable career pathways will clearly offer a quality educational alternative for students and families to embrace.

*Please Note: Should your charter be awarded, the founding governing body could undergo a background check to determine if it qualifies to be a board of public finance in the state of New Mexico.*

Signature of founder(s)

Lorna Samraj

Date: JANUARY 4, 2013

[PRINT NAME] LORNA SAMRAJ for the applicant,  
Healthy Futures Inc.