

## Two vacancies as hospital board members to step down

By Andrew Oxford

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Two Taos Health Systems board members will step down when their terms expire May 31.

Gus Còrdova and Anna Martinez announced during a regular board meeting Feb. 26 they would not remain in their posts. Charlie Gonzales, whose term also expires in May, said he will apply to remain on the board.

Members of the board of directors serve staggered four-year terms. Còrdova, Gonzales and Martinez are the only three directors on the 13-member board whose terms expire this year.

A five-member committee will be formed to nominate candidates for the three seats.

The committee will include several sitting board members — Stuart Hamilton, Dr. Geilan Ismail and Anna Martinez — as well as a member of the medical community, Dr. Jack Garland. Dr. Garland is also the hospital's chief of staff and serves as an ex-officio board member. Local governments — the village of Questa, town of Red River, village of Taos Ski Valley, town of Taos and Taos County — have until March 7 to appoint one representative.

The committee's first meeting has not been scheduled but its members have until mid-May to submit nominations to the board. Previous committees have convened three meetings — one to orient the committee's members, one to review applications and a third to interview selected candidates. A vote on the nominations is expected during a regularly scheduled meeting May 28.

As Còrdova and Martinez served as representatives of communities in southern and central Taos County, respectively, candidates will be sought from those areas. Gonzales serves as a member at large.

According to the hospital's bylaws, the nominating committee will consider candidates based on their experience, relevant areas of interest and expertise.

Applications can be obtained from Holy Cross Hospital as well as on the Taos Health Systems website, [taoshospital.org](http://taoshospital.org).

But at the board's meeting Feb. 26, chairman Ron Burnham acknowledged past criticism that the body's nomination process is insular and weighted towards incumbents.

"The communities actually have the weight of the responsibility," he said. "I just don't think that criticism is very valid."

Còrdova's departure comes after only one term on the board, during which he served as vice chairman.

Semi-retired from a career in public service, he told the board his decision to step down was informed by personal considerations.

"Because I am retired, we have several road trips planned. We'd like to do that while we're still healthy," Còrdova said. "I would be missing quite a few meetings. I don't think it's fair to the board or the hospital to have a board member who would be missing meetings."

Martinez, long an advocate for drug prevention who also serves on the New Mexico Counseling and Therapy Practice Board, steps down from her role at Holy Cross after 24 years.

"It has been a journey I will never forget because I have learned so much from everybody," she told the board.