

**SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR**Ryan Flynn, *Cabinet Secretary-Designate*Butch Tongate, *Deputy Secretary***NEWS RELEASE****September 3, 2013**

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New Mexico Environment Department Announces Source Water Protection Plan for Veterans Administration Hospital In Albuquerque

Albuquerque - The New Mexico Environment Department is pleased to announce the Raymond G. Murphy Veterans Administration Medical Center in Albuquerque has implemented a Source Water Protection Plan for their water supply well, which is located less than 1,000 feet away from a plume of hydrocarbon contamination in groundwater. The Plan, prepared with technical assistance from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau, provides for duplicative monitoring of the supply well, and parallel contingencies for supplying safe water to the Albuquerque hospital if the well becomes contaminated in the future.

“Our mission is to provide the very best health care to the men and women who have put themselves in harm’s way to protect our country,” said Juliana Hankins, Chief of Engineering for the VA Hospital. “Protecting the water that we use to heal veterans is critical to our mission.”

“We are taking every precaution to ensure the health of the patients and staff at the VA is protected” Secretary-Designate Flynn said. “The Source Water Protection Plan prescribes a course of action if the well were to get contaminated in the future.”

The VA well is located approximately 2,600 feet from the source of the Bulk Fuels Facility Spill that was discovered at Kirtland Air Force Base in 1999. The ground water contamination from the spill is less than 1,000 feet from the VA well. NMED is working closely with the Air Force to develop a Final Remediation Plan for the cleanup of the spill. The Air Force is actively leading a testing program of the VA hospital supply well. To date, the Bulk Fuels Facility Spill has migrated northeast of the VA well. Water from the VA well, currently in operation and providing water to the VA hospital, is safe and being tested regularly.

“We have constructed a physical connection to the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Water Authority) supply system,” Hankins said. “On a moment’s notice, we can

disconnect our well and open the valve to the Water Authority's system." In addition to remaining connected to Water Authority water, other potential long-term options include connecting to the Air Base water system, drilling a new well further away from the contamination, and installing a treatment system to remove the contamination from the spill. A Phase 2 Source Water Protection Plan will evaluate the feasibility of each long-term option.

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