

# NEW MEXICAN **Opinion**

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## *La Clinica solves problem*

If there was ever an example of attempting to make the best of a bad situation it would have to be the agreement signed by Santa Fe Archdiocese Archbishop James Peter Davis and the board of La Clinica del Gente, and La Gente for use of the abandon school in Agua Fria for a community clinic.

Last fall the old adobe school and former convent was the scene of a shootout between Spanish American activists and police which left a 17-year-old girl dead and four persons, including two police officers, wounded.

Following the shootout, residents of Agua Fria protested to the Archbishop against continued use of the building by a group calling itself La Escuela y Colegio Tonantzin. Just last month 7 individuals being tried as a result of the shoot out were found innocent of all charges, but the ill feeling and distrust which existed before and after the incident remained.

The five-year, no-rent lease signed by La Clinica with the archdiocese seems like an excellent solution to a difficult problem which will serve the long-range needs of the archdiocese, La Clinica and Santa Fe itself.

La Clinica, a comprehensive community health care clinic, supported with city and county federal revenue sharing funds, and contributions from private individuals and foundations has been at its present location, 537 West San Francisco, since its creation in August of 1972.

Operating with about a \$70,000 a year budget, plus contracts for doctors and nurses from the National Health Service Corps, the clinic provides health care for about 2,500 people a year. Everything from shots, to physical examination, to obstetric care and 24-hour emergency medical care are provided to economically disadvantaged citizens in the community. Fees are charged on a sliding scale depending on the patients' ability to pay.

Mrs. Emma Rivera, director of La Clinica says the group hopes to complete the move to the Agua Fria school and convent by the end of May. In making the move La Clinica will be able to increase its operating space from 2,000 square feet to over 3,000 square feet, as well as be able to save \$250 a month in rent.

In addition, the clinic will now have enough space for inclusion of a dental clinic which is expected to be completed sometime in July.

With the clinic located on Agua Fria Road in western Santa Fe it would be able to serve both rural and urban neighborhoods not yet reached by service as well as those areas being served from its present location.

The use of the controversial property, which has raised so many intense feelings, for this new beneficial and worthwhile activity somehow seems appropriate.

With the former convent and school being converted into a widely used health clinic, few people could disagree with a solution which will help bring better health care for many of the area's residents.