

*The Associated Press*

**ALBUQUERQUE** -- A man convicted of vehicular homicide a decade ago has withdrawn from a position in the University of New Mexico's medical residency program.

Christopher Nabors was sentenced to 15 years in prison for drunkenly driving his car into a Louisiana bayou in February 1995 and killing his passenger, Michelle Haensel.

Nabors, who has a dental degree, was released in March 2003 with good-time reductions and got a conditional admission this year to UNM's residency program. He also got a one-year resident's medical license with conditions.

The university announced Thursday that Nabors' withdrawal from the program was effective Monday.

"He didn't give a reason," said spokesman Sam Giammo.

Nabors' attorney, Herbert Larson Jr. of New Orleans, said the reason was simple: "He withdrew because he was told he wouldn't be hired."

The state Department of Health last month reversed its earlier decision that Nabors had a disqualifying conviction under the caregivers criminal screening program. The department found the law doesn't give it jurisdiction over physicians.

The New Mexico Medical Board had earlier given Nabors a license to serve as a medical resident as long as he participated in a substance abuse monitoring program.

That left it up to UNM's School of Medicine.

Jamie Koch, president of the UNM Board of Regents, said he went to Medical School Dean Paul Roth for a briefing and offered his own position clear that such a person shouldn't be admitted to the program.

"I don't think it speaks good for us. We had other fine candidates," Koch said.

Koch said it was made clear to Nabors' attorney that the selection committee for graduate medical education wasn't going to pass Nabors.

Larson was blunt in his assessment of UNM's position, calling it "craven capitulation" to adverse publicity. He pointed out that Nabors told UNM about his past before the school offered him the position.

William Haensel, the victim's father, has argued that Nabors should not be allowed to practice medicine at least until the full 15 years of his sentence has ended, if at all.

News reports at the time of the accident suggested Nabors did nothing to help his passenger disengage her seat belt before he crawled out his sun roof to safety.