

Student Health and Nursing Services

Health and Wellness Unit



COLORADO
Department of Education

Overview

The goal of providing student health services in school is to maintain the physical, mental, and social health of children so they can benefit maximally from their educational opportunities. Student health services should have oversight by a qualified School Nurse. School nurses support student success by providing health care through assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting. The school nurse addresses the physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs of students and supports their achievement in the learning process. The school nurse not only provides for the safety and care of students and staff but also addresses the need for integrating health solutions into the education setting.

Student Health and School Nursing Services

A student's health status is directly related to his or her ability to learn. Children with unmet health needs have a difficult time engaging in the educational process. Over the past few decades the number of students in Colorado schools with a chronic health condition has greatly increased. Many of these students who were previously in therapeutic settings are now being educated in their local school in the least restrictive environment. Their right to participate is protected by federal law, including IDEA and Rehabilitation Act, Section 504.

Many students are coming to school with increasingly complex medical problems, technically intricate medical equipment, and complicated treatments (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2010). For example, management of Type 1 diabetes has become more complex as these students come to school with insulin pumps and continuous glucose monitoring devices that require constant monitoring by school staff. It is not uncommon to have students who are on ventilators, need gastrostomy tube feedings, or require catheterization. Being prepared to respond in an emergency during the school day for students with a life threatening allergic reaction or seizure disorder is imperative. The responsibility for managing the health needs of the student depends on a qualified school nurse to plan, train and carry out that care. In the recently passed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) there is a crucial provision that highlights the important work that school nurses do in chronic disease management.

School nurses identify vision, hearing, and other health issues in students that impede school performance, making it possible for students to receive needed referrals, treatments, and enabling them to achieve. They promote a healthy school environment through promoting infectious disease control and vaccination compliance. Studies show that immunization rates are higher when

School Nurse Workloads and Student Acuity

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) position is that access to a registered professional nurse all day, every day can improve students' health, safety, and educational achievement.

Student acuity and school community indicators should be assessed to determine appropriate staffing levels.

Access to a school nurse may mean that more than one school nurse is necessary to meet the needs of the school population.

School nurse workloads should be evaluated on at least an annual basis to meet the health and safety needs of school communities (Jameson et al., 2018).

NASN Position Statement:
<https://www.nasn.org/nasn/advocacy/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-workload>

there is a school nurse present at school.

School absenteeism due to chronic illness is significant. Chronic absenteeism is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of those students who may eventually drop out of school. Students who are frequently absent miss not only academics but also miss important socialization opportunities. Various studies have shown that children with a chronic health illness are absent more than their peers and as a result experience the poor academic outcomes associated with increased absenteeism. School nurses, through prevention and treatment of health and behavioral issues, save schools money by improving student attendance and on time grade progression.

2020-2021 data* shows the percentage of students with the following chronic diseases in Colorado Schools:

- Asthma – 6.3%
- Life Threatening Allergies – 3.7%
- Type 1 Diabetes – 0.26%
- Seizures – 0.87%
- Mental Health – 3.2%
- High acuity – 0.64% (requiring one or more skilled nursing tasks during the school day)

*This data is based on the voluntary CDE School Health Data report and represent 63% of the total student population. Due to the low percentage of population represented these data are NOT generalizable.

The [National Association of School Nurses](#) believe all students need access to a school nurse every day. In addition to the number of students covered, staffing for school nursing coverage must include acuity, social needs of students, community/school infrastructure, and characteristics of nursing staff.

The [American Academy of Pediatrics 2016](#) policy statement recommends a full time nurse in every school.

Laws, Rules, Regulations

Legislation Impacting School Health Services:

Federal Legislation

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-20 USC 1412
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act-29 USC 794
- Every Student Succeeds Act-20 USC 70

State Legislation (C.R.S.)

- Sight and hearing test - 22-1-116
- Student possession & administration of prescription medication/medical marijuana - 22-1-119.3
- Asthma, food allergy, and anaphylaxis health management - 22-1-119.5
- Seizure safe schools - 22-1-132
- CPR requirement for coaches - 22-1-125.5
- Instruction in CPR and use of AED - 22-1-129
- Education of Children with Disabilities - 22-20-101– 22-20-120
- Educator Licensing Act – Special Services License 19-3-304 Child Abuse and Reporting - 22-60.5-210
- Nurse Practice Act - 12-255-10
- Child Protection Act- 19-3-301 — 19-3-318

- Rules for Individualized Medical Seizure Action Plans - 1CCR 301-112

State Agency Rules & Regs (C.C.R.)

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

- School Immunizations - 6 CCR 1009-2
- Infectious Disease - 6 CCR 1009-1
- Rules & Regulations Governing Schools - 6 CCR 1010-6

Colorado Department of Education (CDE)

- Exceptional Student Educational Act - 1CCR 301-8
- Educator Licensing - 1CCR 301-37
- Rules for the Administration of Medication- 1 CCR 301-68
- School Health Professional Grant - 1 CCR 301-97

Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS)

- Childcare Licensing Rules - 12 CCR 2509-8

Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA)

- Delegation of Nursing Tasks - 3 CCR 716-1.13

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

- For more information about school nursing, visit the School Nursing and Health Webpage:
https://www.cde.state.co.us/healthandwellness/snh_home
- To view contact information, visit the School Nursing and Health Contact Us Webpage:
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/healthandwellness/contactus>
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit the CDE Fact Sheets and FAQs Webpage:
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/factsheetsandfaqs>