



Dear NH School Nurses

Welcome back to the 2018-2019 school year!

The New Hampshire School Nurses' Association has been working hard on your behalf, preparing for another year of advocating for you, our school nurses, who are dedicating to caring for the students of New Hampshire. Our mission as professional school nurses is to provide comprehensive school health services to ensure that all students achieve their full education potential.

Every year brings new challenges, as the health care needs of our students become more and more complex. Issues of school violence and the opioid crisis have added to the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of our children in schools. In addition to managing many acute and chronic health conditions, NH school nurses are leaders in their schools, helping with emergency planning, educating students and staff on public health issues, and advocating for students and families in crisis. School nurses are often the sole health care providers in their schools, and may serve as the silent health care system for those without access to primary care. School nurses are in a key position to assist families with connecting to a medical home, or to a primary care provider, and with getting access to state health insurance programs. To prepare school nurses for this increasingly complex role, the Department of Education passed a law for those hired after July 1, 2016 to have a Bachelors degree in Nursing, and to become certified by the NH Department of Education. Nurses hired before July 1, 2016 are grandfathered and already eligible for certification. Questions about certification should be addressed through The NH Department of Education, Credentialing and Certification. <https://www.education.nh.gov/certification/>.

Please note that we continue to advocate for the school nurse consultant position in the Department of Education. This position is currently vacant due to budget constraints.

The NHSNA Board of Directors and Committee chairs met this summer to establish some goals for the school year. First with plans to provide quality continuing education through a variety of upcoming programs, including a conference on October 5th "Back to School, Healthy, Safe and Ready to Learn", our fall meeting on October 19, where Judge Broderick will lead a discussion on mental illness and share resources from Campaign to Change Direction New Hampshire. We will also host School Nurse Essentials November 9 and 10, a program for both new and established school nurses on best practice topics for your health office.

On August 20th, we hosted "School Nursing Issues Panel Discussion". At this conference we teamed up with the Department of Education, Board of Nursing and NEA NH to discuss Legal and nursing practice issues in schools, and thanks to Diana Fenton at the Department of education, we gave out free backpacks for school nurses to bring back for their students in need.

We hope to collaborate with other organizations across New Hampshire to explore other ways to support our students, such as projects with the asthma collaborative, and support for the Lead prevention group at DHHS. Other goals include a mentorship program for new school nurses, as well as to ease the task of finding a nursing sub when needed in our health offices.

Lastly, do you have a special interest in creating policies and Bylaws, legislative initiatives, or in advocacy for NH school nurses? Please contact us if you are interested in joining our Board and serving on one of our committees. We would be happy to have you join us to support our goals.

Sending best wishes for a happy and successful 2018-19 school year.

Sincerely,
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