



Dear NH School Nurses

Happy summer! We have made it through another school year, and if you are one to plan ahead, you are already prepping for the first day of the 2019/20 school year.

Before you return to your busy role at school, be sure to take some time for yourself this summer. Read a good book, create a walking or hiking plan, find some fun cycling routes, or plan some relaxing time on our beautiful NH lakes and beaches. Whatever you do, be sure to get out there to enjoy the beautiful state we live in. We can best care for others if we nurture ourselves as well!

Vaccines:

We have some excellent new resources available on our website for assisting you with vaccine compliance, provided by Dr. Angela Shephard from the NH Medical Association. Look for them on our member's only page. The new resources on our website are colorful and eye catching, and will assist you as you communicate with parents regarding required immunizations in the coming months. Our role of promoting vaccines is most important right now, as we face a Measles outbreak in the US. There are 880 cases of the measles so far in 2019; infections are primarily in unvaccinated individuals. The outbreak is in 24 states with two cases in New Hampshire this past spring.

Most New Hampshire parents who choose not to vaccinate their child use the religious exemption option, which requires a notary public stamp and signature, with a copy on file in the child's school health record. This legal exemption is a bit of a loophole, allowing parents to make a choice to not vaccinate their child; rarely are there religious reasons connected with the document submitted to schools.

With "Herd Immunity", when a community is immunized as a whole for a disease, everyone is adequately protected. As members of a community choose not to immunize, there are holes in the protection that get bigger with each person who is not immunized. Some individuals in our community are particularly susceptible to adverse consequences of the disease, such as those who can't be immunized for medical reasons. Others at risk include infants younger than 12 months of age, pregnant women with waning immunity, and people with compromised immune systems. Even those who have been previously immunized may have some waning immunity, which creates a risk for these healthy people as well.

School nurses are public health representatives and we have a responsibility to maintain the health of the entire school community. As advocates for students, teachers, and families, we need to voice our concerns and give sound advice for best practice regarding disease

prevention. Now is a good time for school nurses to review your students' exemptions. Consider contacting and educating families who have chosen not to immunized for the Measles vaccine. Ask them to immunize their child with the MMR vaccine to protect them from a virus that is currently a risk, particularly if they travel, and to enhance protection from the disease for the community's students, families, and teachers.

The Measles vaccine is proven through research to be effective and safe, with the benefits far outweighing the risks of side effects. It can be helpful to clarify any misconceptions about the vaccine, including misinformation that has been shared over the years, particularly the disproven correlation with autism. Remind parents that should there be an exposure by an infected individual to the community, the health department would be contacted to determine an exclusion time from school for their child. This time frame may last from days to weeks, depending on the exposure and the risk of continued measles incidents in the community. School nurse must be on alert for students presenting with Measles symptoms, so they can be promptly isolated to minimize exposure to the community.

School Nursing Issues Panel Discussion:

Back by popular demand, we will be hosting our School Nursing Issues Panel Discussion on August 20th, at the Health Trust building in Concord, NH. Details will be posted about this conference on our website soon. [NH School Nurses Association Website](#)

Mental Health Training:

There is a excellent program available on Mental Health First Aid that is a resource for School nurses, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators and coaches. This is an 8-hour course that teaches how to identify youth having a mental health or substance use related crisis, how to assist them, and how to summon the appropriate professional help. For more information on classes being offered by West Central Behavioral Health (June 6 and September 6). [West Central Behavioral Health](#)

Nursing Delegation:

The New Hampshire Nurses Association just posted a new position statement on delegation. If you are not already a member, I recommend you join so you have access to valuable nursing resources.

[NHNA Delegation Statement](#)

Enjoy your break from school! NHSNA looks forward to reconnecting with school nurses in the fall. If you would like to join us for a Board meeting, we meet once a month starting in September at the NEA building in Concord. Dates will be posted in August.

Sincerely,

Kathy Barth BSN, RN, NCSN

