



Dear NH School Nurses;

We are more than halfway through our school year and spring is right around the corner!

There are a number of continuing education and networking opportunities available to you in the coming months. Our NHSNA spring conference and meeting Building Connections is April 13th, at the Castleton Banquet and Conference Center in Windham, NH. We will announce the recipient of School nurse of the Year, as well as honor our NH school nurse retirees. Please join us!

<https://nhsna.wildapricot.org/event-3265451>

Every year, one of the New England States hosts a conference for all of the NE states. The New England conference this year is in Burlington, VT, from May 3-5. This is a nice opportunity to hear speakers from outside of NH, and to meet school nurses from neighboring states.

<https://www.vssna.org/>

The National Association School Nurse conference is in Denver, June 28-July 1. If you have never attended a NASN conference, I highly recommend taking advantage of this inspiring event. Last year there were hundreds of school nurses from across the country, gathered in Baltimore to learn about the latest school nurse topics and to enjoy 3 days of collaboration.

<https://www.nasn.org/nasn/programs/conferences/annual-conference>

Are you wondering where we are with the bill for school nurse coordinator position in the DOE? House Bill 719 was written to make this position permanent. If passed, school nurses in NH will be able to count on the person in this position to assist with the many complex health issues we face in our independent role at school.

The progression of a house bill is a long process. HB 719 has already been through the following:

- December 2018: Drafted by Rep. Polly Campion at the request of NHSNA;
- Consultation with New Hampshire Nurses' Association Lobbyist Bob Dunn
- Early January: Fiscal Note attached
- January 18<sup>th</sup>: Referred to House Education Committee
- January 29<sup>th</sup> Presented via webinar to 200 nurses at the Legislative Town Hall Forum
- January 30<sup>th</sup> Board members who have worked hard to advocate for this bill testified at the hearing before the Education Committee
- February 12<sup>th</sup>: NHSNA along with NHNA hosted a legislative breakfast to talk with legislators about health care and school nursing issues in a more relaxed atmosphere
- February 12<sup>th</sup> Executive Session of the Committee, Voted 13 to 6 in favor, to proceed to the house floor for a vote. Bill was amended to increase the pay grade for the position to a masters' prepared nurse
- February 27<sup>th</sup> Passed with amendment on the house floor 198 to 146
- February 27<sup>th</sup> Sent to Finance Committee

Pending action: The finance committee has the authority to place the position directly into the next state budget. If they do, it will not have to go to the Senate. If they don't, it will proceed to the Senate in late March with the same process repeated.

You can see that this is a very long process with many steps along the way. A bill can pass, or it can fail at any of the votes along the way, or at the final signature with the Governor. Through NHSNA's networking, many Legislators have learned about the NH school nurse role, and we have a lot of support for this position in the House of Representatives.

There are a few other bills we are watching, including HB 131 to establish a commission on mental health education in schools. One of our Board members testified on this bill; subsequently HB131 has been amended to include a school nurse on the commission.

There are two bills regarding School Nurse Certification: HB 275 to eliminate School Nurse Certification, as well as an alternative bill in the senate SB137, which clarifies the current certification law by defining the grandfather clause, as well as extending the amount of time a school nurse would have to acquire a BSN once they are hired as a school nurse. Every state that borders New Hampshire has a school nurse certification law. Our students are the benefactors of certification, which provides for a minimal standard of qualification, in both education and experience, to be hired as a school nurse. NHSNA has testified to kill HB 275; we will support SB 137 at the public hearing.

We will keep you posted on progress with all of these laws in the legislature. The legislative page of our website is updated regularly. Check it out at <https://nhsna.wildapricot.org/Legislative-Updates>

Sincerely,

Kathy Barth BSN, RN NCSN

President NHSNA