



New York State Association of School Nurses

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"Caring for New York's Future"

POSITION STATEMENT

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

INTRODUCTION

The practice of school nursing began in the United States in 1902. The main focus of school nursing was to reduce absenteeism by intervening with students and families regarding health care needs related to communicable diseases. While the nurse's role has expanded greatly, the essence of the practice remains the same. The school nurse supports student success by providing health care assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting. (NASN, 2002).

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the National Association of School Nurses Board of Directors defined school nursing as:

"A specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students. School nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with other school personnel to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self management, self advocacy, and learning".

Inherent in this definition is the framework that school nurses engage in professional nursing practice, use the nursing process for decision-making, document the care they provide, and assure confidentiality. Professional school nurses address the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of their clients. In addition, professional school nurses have as the ultimate outcome of their practice, the support of student success in the learning process. In this context the school nurse provides services to the entire school population, and, in some instances, adults within the school community. (NASN 2002).

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

NYSASN promotes, supports, and represents school nurses who have a high level of academic preparation and are licensed to practice as Registered Professional Nurses under New York State Education Law.

School nurses strengthen and facilitate the educational process by improving and protecting the health status of children and by identification and assistance in the removal or modification of health related barriers to learning. The major focus of school nursing is the promotion of health and the early detection and correction of health problems.

School Nurses continue to expand their identified roles. More and more students are attending mainstream academic programs within the school setting. Ongoing professional growth is essential for all school nurses to remain current with new issues specific to the care of all students within the practice of school nursing.

Adapted from NASN Issue Brief "Role of the School Nurse" (2002) and previous NYSASN Position Statement "The School Nurse".

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