

President message to NYS Association of School Nurses May 2010

President Suzanne Smith

Just yesterday I wished everyone a Happy New Year- and now School Nurses are racing to finish their screenings and documentation for the current school year. School Nurses are preparing for the next year sports physicals as well as are in the midst of Kindergarten registrations and screenings. Good luck fellow School Nurses.

In about two weeks, we can celebrate *National School Nurse Day May 12, 2010. Congratulations to all School Nurses for the worthy job that you all do "Caring for New York's Future!"*

I firmly believe that despite the lack of a mandate for NYS School Nurses that, the role of a School Nurse is valued. It is the lack of a funding stream that places New York State School Nurse jobs in jeopardy not necessarily that the School Nurse role is not appreciated/valued. At a time that children and youth need a School Nurse the most, it does not seem fair to place the most vulnerable of our population at risk with the threat of School Nurse job cuts this year. Every child deserves a Registered Professional School Nurse to advocate for a child's health in every school building.

As School Nurses know, the presence of a School Nurse protects the public.

A School Nurse's day includes many responsibilities such as:

- Management of infectious/communicable disease and providing data to the NYSDOH

- Interpreting compliance with NYS Immunization Laws and providing data to the NYSDOH

- Health-teaching on Infection Control measures to reduce disease transmission

- Safe medication administration (The School Nurse collaborates with the parent/guardian and physician and provides staff training as needed) The School Nurse is in a position to assess how many times an epi-pen or glucagon is given when a registered professional nurse is in a school building

- Assessment for first aid needs and sometimes including provision of emergency first aid

- Collaboration with parents, students and school staff to ensure sound daily care plans in school as needed for emergent, episodic and/or chronic health care needs. Chronic health conditions in children have drastically increased. (Diabetes, asthma, food allergies, attention-deficit disorders, autism)

- Vigilance for signs of child abuse/neglect

- Communication of community resources for underinsured families such as free dental or vision screenings

- Annual and periodic risk assessments for the athletes for school sports as required by NYS

The School Nurse's day also includes:

Collaboration with all school staff: bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers administrators, professional school staff as well as with parents and students.

Participation on Health and wellness committees

Participation in surveys and gathering of data (such as BMI statistics) to learn more about childhood obesity

And on a regular basis, School Nurses struggle to find time to take a lunch break... New York State School districts will soon vote on annual budgets in May 2010 without a state budget in place! Please keep your zone representative aware of potential School Nurse job reductions in your zone.

School Nurses must not give up hope that the public will support their role of advocacy for students! School Nurses do reduce barriers to learning so that students can be successful in school and beyond.

Join, rejoin or talk a colleague into becoming a member of the New York State Association of School Nurses. Now is the time to align your school nurse role with your professional nurse organization.

Sign on to the "member only" page to view highlights of the April 2010 Board of Directors meeting.

Have a great School Nurse Day May 12, 2010.

Sincere Thanks for all of your support for School Nurses and NYSASN.

Suzanne Smith

President NYSASN