

Position Statement:

The School Nurse/School-Based Health Center Partnership

School nurses and school-based health center (SBHC) staff share an important mission: protecting and advancing the health and well-being of our nation's school-aged children and youth. Although multiple health professionals in a school setting may have distinctive and complementary functions, funding, and accountability, their objectives are met effectively and efficiently through collaboration. Working as partners, school nurses and staff of school-based health centers are able to increase compliance with treatment plans, facilitate access to needed health and mental health care, monitor outcomes of care, uniformly document care, collect data about health needs and outcomes of care, and provide case management – all critical for improving the quality of health care and academic outcomes for school-aged children and youth.

The school nurse is responsible for the day-to-day management of the health of all students to ensure their ability to participate in the classroom setting and to learn to their greatest potential. The school nurse routinely assesses students' needs, utilizing and valuing the additional easily accessible and user-friendly resource of the SBHC for students who need health, mental health, and social services. The staff of SBHCs either directly provides or makes available age-appropriate primary services such as health, dental, mental health, social services, and health education. Services are available to eligible students who enroll to receive care in the center. Research indicates that SBHCs provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective way to deliver health services. While SBHCs do exist in schools that have limited or no nursing services, they do not take the place of nursing services.

Collaboration between health care providers in SBHCs and school nurses enhances students' health, academic outcomes, lifelong achievement, and overall student and staff well-being. In support of successful school nurse – SBHC partnerships, it is our shared vision that collaboration should be characterized by:

- Inclusion of student, family, and school staff within the parameters of confidentiality;
- Well-defined roles and responsibilities that promote seamless and comprehensive care for students and their families;
- Mutual respect and support for each partner's contributions;
- Cooperative planning and implementation of school health services and programs to promote the health of the student body;
- Joint policies and procedures that ensure the quality and confidentiality of care received by students;
- Information sharing and exchange that protects student privacy and ensures continuity and coordination of care; and
- A collaborative focus on student academic outcomes.

Bibliography:

Role of the School Nurse in School Based Health Centers, Position Statement, National Association of School Nurses, 2001