

Improving Student Absenteeism with Targeted Health Educational Tools

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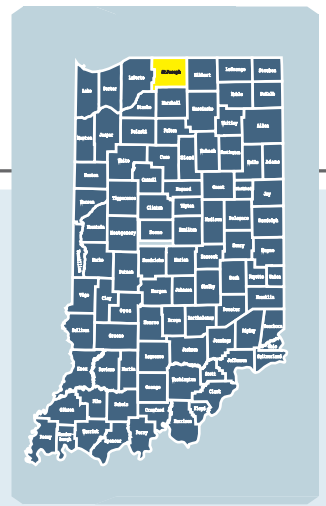
SUMMARY

In collaboration with the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), South Bend Community School Corporation (SBCSC) school nurses are using funding from the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) to positively impact the absenteeism rate of their students with diabetes. The education project involves 35 schools that serve over 18,000 students in grades PK-12 and targets various health and social challenges encountered by those having the diagnosis of diabetes. The outcome of this project is overall improved school attendance seen in those students followed, as well as an increased level of confidence felt by the school nurses providing student health care.



CHALLENGE

The growing number of U.S. youth (<20 years of age) diagnosed with diabetes is well documented. According to the 2017 National Diabetes Statistics Report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 193,000 children and adolescents younger than the age of 20 have diagnosed diabetes. What is true nationwide is also reflected in the state of Indiana. While understanding the significant hours spent at school and in school-related activities, school nurses are positioned to not only monitor student absenteeism rates, but also witness the many physical and social complications experienced by these youth. By identifying and addressing some of these issues with students and their families, school nurses can have a direct impact on their overall well-being leading to an improved school attendance rate.



YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Individuals working to maintain the health of students with a diabetes diagnosis realize that it requires a team effort involving health care providers, families, school nurses and school staff.

To learn more about keeping students with diabetes safe at school, visit:
<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/parents-and-kids/diabetes-care-at-school/>

For more information about the management of diabetes in schools, visit:
<https://www.nasn.org/search?executeSearch=true&SearchTerm=diabetes&l=1>

"This collaborative effort provides ongoing diabetic education to our nursing staff. The informational brochures and webinars are extremely useful and have enhanced our ability to care for students with diabetes. With this emphasis on promoting skilled diabetic management, our students are better equipped and supported during their school day. Attendance rates have improved, and parents are confident we can provide knowledgeable care for their child during the school day."

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SOLUTION

In 2015, the IDOE launched a pilot study in collaboration with the SBCSC in an effort to encourage positive impacts in both personal health care management as well as improved school attendance rates for their students with diabetes. While implementing specific diabetes health education tools developed by IDOE, these nurses repeatedly engaged in meaningful conversations with students and their family members to address some of the commonly shared health and social obstacles so often experienced by youth living with diabetes. After conducting a needs assessment with the SBCSC school nurses, IDOE identified several popular topics for their focus in the development of their educational tools. To date, they include: "Faces of Diabetes: The Long-term Consequences of Poor Diabetes Management" (PDF); "Care of Students with Diabetes-Updates in Technologies and Medications" (webinar); "Your Diabetes Health Care Team" (slide show); and "FAQs Indiana's Diabetes Law" (PDF).

RESULTS

From the launch of the initiative in 2015, SBCSC school nurses have provided care for a district-wide total of 42-49 students with diabetes each semester. Focusing on this student population, the attendance data tracked to date indicates an overall decline in the average days absent per semester ranging between an initial high of 9.58 days to a low of 6.97 days. Additionally, the district's school nurse manager reports increased attention given by school nurses towards the development and implementation of individual healthcare plans, diabetes health education involving both students and parents, as well as appropriate referrals to the community.

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
NCCDPHP

Contact CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/requestform.html>

Website

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Moving ahead, the IDOE, supported by the use of grant funding from ISDH, continues to evaluate the effectiveness of the focused diabetes educational tools provided to SBCSC for diabetes education. Additionally, the department will proceed to expand its professional development opportunities, training and guidance materials, as well as online resources for nurses from across the state to access in their efforts to maintain professional competency. IDOE will also maintain partnerships with regional health care experts regarding diabetes care and management so that appropriate advances are incorporated into guidance materials.



Indiana State
Department of Health