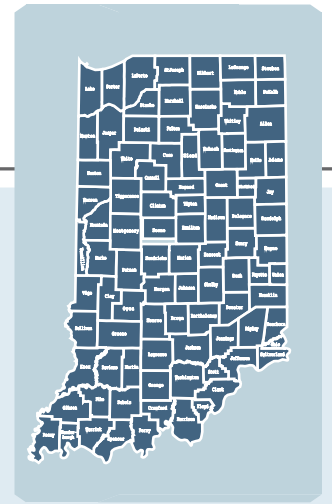


Indiana Expands Professional Development for School Nurses

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SUMMARY

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Student Services/School Health Department is expanding its professional development and training/technical assistance for school nurses regardless of their location. IDOE has partnered with the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) to facilitate the use of grant funding provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). IDOE's aim is to reach school nurses statewide with expanded, multi-tiered professional development opportunities via direct communication avenues, live training events, an expanded website and sustainable, online training courses.



YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Parents and community leaders can reach out to school nurses and administrators to learn more about their provision of professional development. Community health agencies such as local health departments can also be key partners with school districts to optimize student health and learning.

For more information, visit <https://www.doe.in.gov/student-service/health>.

This project is supported by the State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health cooperative agreement (DP13-1305).

CHALLENGE

General consensus among decision-makers is that school nurses are beneficial for schools and the health maintenance of students, thus ensuring that they are ready learners. Research has shown that with school nurses' professional assessments, student absenteeism rates and early school dismissals due to illness have declined. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, as many as 27% of American children have chronic health conditions, which lends to the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation that every school employ a full-time registered nurse. Unfortunately, not every school has a nurse full-time and some don't have one at all. In reality, schools are continuing to experience budget restraints resulting in decreasing school nurse investments and the sharing of school nurses, which results in their occasional school presence. Considering these factors, school nurses are increasingly experiencing little availability (with regards to time and/or funding) to attend offsite trainings and professional development opportunities. Thus, IDOE is maximizing efforts to provide Indiana school nurses access to various professional development and guidance materials from their school location or elsewhere, whenever time permits.

"I signed up as soon as I received the notice! I am a big fan of the classes that the IDOE is offering for school nurses. I hope you keep them coming."

Toni Gillig, RN, Indiana School Nurse

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SOLUTION

To support the multifaceted school nurse professional development project, IDOE reached out to multiple community experts to collaborate in the overall goal of offering improved, accurate and updated professional development and guidance materials for school nurses. Such partners include the Indiana Emergency Medical Services for Children, Riley Hospital for Children, McMillen Health, ISDH, state school administrators and community legal and physician experts. Multiple educational tools were developed using various training platforms; they include the Indiana School Nurse Manual, which includes specific guidance for the management and delivery of school health services in the areas of delegation, explanation and compliance with federal, state and local law, chronic disease management, development of health care plans, medical care procedures and best practices, patient triage, health screenings and reference materials and professional organization suggestions.

RESULTS

To date, more than 4,492 school nurses have participated in two of the program's rigorous online courses: "The Care of Students with Diabetes" and the "EMSC Emergency Care Course for School Nurses." Through post-testing, IDOE has tracked successful course completion by over 1,558 nurses. Additionally, both the IDOE website and the Learning Connection (a guidance materials repository site) are referenced daily. Indiana school nurses have been quick to praise the program's courses and materials, particularly for their easy accessibility. Because nurses have the growing responsibility of including not only the provision of general health services, but also emergency preparedness, health education of students and staff, immunization surveillance and care of students with chronic diseases, there is often neither time nor means to travel for professional development events. Through the prudent use of grant funding, IDOE is providing nurses with the various professional development opportunities they seek.

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

Prior to Indiana's training and technical assistance expansion, school nurses primarily communicated their questions and concerns to their state consultants by phone or email. With this information initiative, school nurses are better targeting their own particular research and training needs while keeping pace with their student health care responsibilities.

With said successes in place, IDOE continues to develop further regional and statewide online training opportunities matching the current social, physical and mental health challenges experienced by students on a daily basis. In order to keep a pulse on those current health challenges and thereby best plan future educational materials, IDOE has asked school nurses to participate in a voluntary school health survey. One of the survey's many goals is to identify the most significant student health issues while targeting the geographic areas experiencing those issues.



Indiana State
Department of Health