



GOVERNOR'S PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION

Children and Adolescent Health



Our goal: To ensure that every Hoosier has access to the core public health services that allow them to achieve their optimal health and wellbeing.

Indiana statute establishes a series of required school curriculum content on health-related topics, including bullying prevention, child abuse, nutrition and physical activity, and child sexual abuse. School corporations also are required to provide health services at the elementary and secondary levels, including prevention, assessment, intervention, and referral.

Required Indiana School Health Services



Prevention

Focuses on creating a safe and healthy school environment through a continuous health program



Intervention

Provide health services, including emergency care and mental health counseling with parental consent



Assessment

Use the nursing process to collect, interpret, and record information about the health, developmental, and educational status of students to determine a diagnosis and develop healthcare plans



Referral

Coordinate health services with families, other school programs, in-school professionals, school-based and community-based resources

Youth Risk Behaviors

- Accidents are the leading cause of death among Hoosier children ages 1-19 years
- Almost 41% of students do not always wear a seat-belt when riding in a car driven by someone else
- About 31% of Indiana students reported concerns with their mental health "most or all of the time"
- 11.8% of Hoosier students said they had attempted suicide at least one time in the prior year
- About 20% of Indiana students grades 9-12 currently smoke or use electronic vaping products
- 17% of Hoosier students have taken prescription pain medication without a doctor's order or take the medication differently than it was prescribed
- Almost 33% of students were either overweight or obese according to their weight as compared to their height
- Almost 79% of students spent 3 or more hours per day on screen time (not including their homework time)
- Less than 45% of students said they were physically active at least 60 minutes per day five of seven days a week

Source: 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey



Current challenges:

- Many school corporations do not meet the recommended ratio of one registered nurse (RN) for every 750 students
- School nurses are typically classified by school corporations as support personnel versus certified staff, contributing to low pay and staffing shortages
- A single school nurse may be shared across schools within a district
- School corporations are held accountable for educational outcomes, and funding for school nurse positions is often challenging among competing priorities for local education dollars
- Indiana's recommended ratio of 1 school counselor or social worker per 700 students is below the national recommendation of 1 per 250 students



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Benefits of School Nurses and School-based Health Centers



Cost savings

Reduces parent loss of work time, teacher time, healthcare costs



Reduced absenteeism

Helps decrease student absenteeism and early dismissals due to health concerns



Improved vaccination rates

Can reduce spread of illness, keep students healthier and in school



Fewer emergency department visits

Lower hospitalization usage

- Studies have demonstrated the link between health and academic success. Healthy students are better learners!
- Health risk behaviors are linked to poor grades, low test scores, and lower educational attainment.
- Indiana currently has 1,868 public schools.
- Schools play a crucial role in promoting the health of children and adolescents and assisting students in developing lifelong healthy behaviors.
- Research demonstrates the potential for school health programs to reduce youth health risk behaviors and positively impact academic performance.
- Studies further suggest physical activity and fitness improve children's academic and health performance.
- School-based Health Centers can improve educational and health outcomes and serve the school population and surrounding community.

Next steps:



Work to improve the school nurse to student ratio, including supporting school nurse recruitment and retention



Encourage initiatives to improve the ratio of school counselor, social worker, and psychologist to student



Provide technical assistance to schools interested in providing School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) in partnership with local health systems



Support access to health screenings and services that can be appropriately delivered in school and early childhood education settings while upholding parental/guardian consent mechanisms



Make evidence-based curricula on health and oral health matters available for schools and early childhood education settings to access



Leverage state, community, and school corporation partnerships to prioritize and implement school wellness policies



Address childhood injury and violence prevention and promote efforts to keep youth safe, which includes reducing unintentional firearm deaths and suicide and increasing access to safety equipment shown to decrease child injuries, such as seatbelts and bicycle helmets



Support the development of school-based health centers

Be a public health champion!
Learn more at www.in.gov/gphc