



North West Ohio
Association of
School Nurses

NEWSLETTER

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Spring 2007

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Dear NWOASN Members,

It's hard to believe that another school year is drawing to a close. This is a busy time for everyone with kindergarten registration, health education and just keeping up with the daily demands of our students, staff and schools.

And yet we find time to increase our knowledge and further our education by attending conferences. Several Northwest members traveled to Dublin, Ohio for the annual OASN weekend and update. It was a time to renew friendships and to gather new information. We all agreed it was a great weekend. Several of our members were elected or re-elected to the board; Kathy Inderbitzen will continue as president, Jan Florian as secretary, and newly elected Maureen Knowles as vice president. Northwest should be proud to have such representation at the state level.

Also, several members from Northwest will be traveling to Cleveland to help with an item review for the certification exam. Maureen, Kathy and Jan Overmyer will be part of the test revision. Hats off to them for their commitment to this process.

We still have one last conference on May 10. The speaker is Dr. Lisa Pescara-Kovach, who will speak on bullying. Hope to see everyone there as we install new officers.

It has been a rewarding year, and I treasure the new friendships and support everyone has shown me.

Here's to healthier kids, every day.

Sincerely,

Candi Hendershot, RN, MS
President, NWOASN



Save the Date!!.....

The Northwest Ohio Association of School Nurses will hold their spring meeting:

Date: Thursday, May 10, 2007
Where: St. Lukes Hospital, Auditorium A
Time: Sign-in at 5:45 p.m.
Dinner from 6:00—6:30 p.m.
Speaker from 6:30—7:30 p.m.
NWOASN meeting from 7:30—8:00 p.m.



The topic is “Bullying in the Schools: The School Nurse’s Role.” The speaker is Dr. Lisa Pescara-Kovach, Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Toledo. She is the creator of the P.E.E.R.S. (Preventing, Eliminating and Erasing Rejection in our Schools) program, Director of Bullying Police Ohio, and has taught, published and spoken extensively on the topic of bullying. Registration forms for the meeting will be mailed in early April. If you are not a member of NWOASN and want to attend, contact Laurie Gladieux at 419-385-8029. If you would like to join NWOASN, contact Ann Cipriani.

News from OASN

OASN is hard at work representing you at the local district and at the state level. The board is in frequent contact with Sam Whitaker, our legislative aid. His work to make School Nursing visible in the Ohio senate and house has been exemplary! One of our biggest accomplishments in the past year was the language additions in the Epi-Pen bill.

Our Executive Director, Renee Besecker, President, Kathy Inderbitzen, and Vice President, Maureen Knowles, have sched-

uled visits for five possible sites for the 2008 and 2009 OASN conferences. Please be ready to sign up to assist us in making the state conference for the next two years fun and full of learning opportunities for all.

Thank you for all your support while I served as your OASN Representative to the OASN Board. I have learned so very much and have been able to network with colleagues all over the state.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Knowles
NW Representative to the OASN Board



Ohio Department of Health News

Children of Immigrant and Refugees—What the research tells us. A six-page fact sheet that provides information on immigration trends, the mental health, language and cultural needs of immigrant and refugee children, and highlights the role schools can play in providing culturally competent care. A resource section containing web links is included at the end of the fact sheet.

www.healthinschools.org/sh/immigrantoverview.asp

Pandemic Influenza Resources—The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) encourage schools to incorporate pandemic influenza



into their current emergency/safety plan. The ODH School Nursing Program has developed the Pandemic Influenza Toolkit for Ohio Schools to assist schools with this planning process. The Toolkit includes influenza resources and planning checklists; guidance on surveillance and reporting of health trends; infection control; mental health considerations; and sample communications for parents, the community and the media.

We recently mailed one copy of this Toolkit to every school district superintendent in Ohio as well as every local health department. Additional copies of this toolkit can be downloaded at www.ohiopandemicflu.gov. On this website you will also find a comprehensive list of pandemic resources that may be helpful with your planning process as well as edu-

cating your students, staff and community. Click on the “Schools” tab for school-specific information.

In addition, the ODH, ODE and Ohio Resource Network for Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (ORN) have collaborated to provide free hand washing



posters targeted to elementary (these may work for middle school also) aged students. This simple and colorful poster stresses the importance of hand hygiene and cough etiquette to prevent the spread of cold and flu virus. Posters for classrooms, restrooms and cafeterias can be ordered by calling the Ohio Resource Network Clearinghouse at 1-800-788-7254, option #3.

“Green” Student Health Records—ODH is no longer going to be able to provide individual student health records to schools in Ohio. We are committed to keeping an updated template posted to our website, so that as things change, the form will be current. You can use the template to print records for your school if you choose. Here is the link to the template: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/chss/schnurs/schnurs1.aspx>. Click on “Green School Health Folder.” This is a print-ready pdf file. The printing specifications which have been utilized by ODH are as follows: Die-cut folder with 4” single tab, single score and rounded corners. Print on 110# Green Springhill Index. Birthdate line must be visible above die-cut.



New Federal Policy on Medication

What do you do with your “left over” meds at the end of the school year?? If flushing them down the toilet is your procedure—then read about the new federal guidelines at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press07/022007.html> or http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper_disposal.html

News from the OASN Conference by Jan Florian

The 34th Annual Conference of the Ohio Association of School Nurses, "Cruising School Health Issues," was held at the Embassy Suites on March 16-18 in Dublin, Ohio. There were 190 attendees who were led by NWOASN's own Kathy Inderbitzin as "Captain" of the Cruise and OASN President. The conference included a wide choice of programs on medical, educational, research and legal issues affecting School Nurses.

Dr. Patrick Cooper was excellent as the keynote speaker with his presentation, "The Whole Child and Coordinated School Health—There is Life After Tests...and Before!" As always, Dr. Cooper was extremely supportive of School Nurses and our role in the health and educational success of children. He gave OASN a dvd for reproduction that highlights his program. This dvd will be available through OASN in the near future and can be shared with local administrators—watch the oasn.org website for more details. Dr. Cooper was also the speaker at the Endowment dinner on Friday evening attended by 27 OASN members.

At the annual business meeting on Saturday, NWOASN had 16 voting members attend. During this meeting it was announced that Candi Hendershot was awarded the Carolyn Azbell Research Award for the "Elementary School Nurses' Perceptions and Practices Regarding BMI Measurement of School Children." This project is Candi's dissertation research as she completes her Doctoral program at the University of Toledo. **Congratulations, Candi!!** Candi will report her results to OASN at next year's annual conference.

Which leads to the next piece of news...Next year's OASN Annual Conference will be held in Northwest Ohio and will be planned by our own NWOASN **newly elected** OASN Vice-President, Maureen Knowles! **Congratulations, Maureen!!** Maureen announced that she is grateful for several NWOASN members who have already volunteered to chair com-

mittees related to the conference. She will be looking for conference speaker suggestions and more committee help in the near future.

The conference closed on Sunday morning with a visit from Senator Steve Stivers. Senator Stivers is working with OASN in presentation of legislation supporting School Nurses and "Every Child Has a Right to be Safe at School." This legislation specifically addresses Certified School Nurse to Student Ratios. Senator Stivers, along with the Legislative Committee of OASN (including members Kathy Inderbitzen and Maureen Knowles), are researching funding sources for this Bill.



Enjoy the Week!

Happy National Nurses' Week
May 6-12, 2007

Is There a Nurse in the House? Schools Endure Shortage as Health Needs Rise

(reprinted from an article in Wall Street Journal Online, November 2006)

Vivian Amato took out her watch recently and did a test run, trying to determine how fast the school nurse assigned to her grandson's elementary school could reach him in an emergency.

Her grandson, Trey, is a first-grader at Southeast Lauderdale Elementary School in Meridian, Miss. The boy has Type I diabetes and needs to be closely monitored. But the school nurse also cares for students at a nearby middle school. If Trey were to slip into a diabetic coma, and the nurse was at the middle school, she'd have to sprint to her car, drive four minutes to Trey's school—three minutes if she sped through the red light—and then run to the boy's classroom.

By Ms. Amato's calculations, the fastest the nurse could arrive at Trey's side would be about eight minutes. "But my grandson could be brain-dead in five to seven minutes," she says. That's why she's now mounting a crusade to get Lauderdale County School District to hire more school nurses.

Spread Thin

Federal guidelines suggest that a school nurse be assigned to no more than 750 students. Just 12 states comply. Vermont has the lowest ratio, Utah the highest. A sampling of states in 2005:

- ◆ Vermont.....1 nurse per 305 students
- ◆ New Jersey.....1 to 651
- ◆ New York.....1 to 1,008
- ◆ California.....1 to 2,241
- ◆ Florida.....1 to 2,639
- ◆ Michigan.....1 to 3,611
- ◆ Utah.....1 to 4,952

Source: National Association of School Nurses

These are overwhelming times for the nation's 50,000 school nurses, as they cope with school budget cuts, a nationwide nursing shortage and a growing number of students with serious medical needs. Federal guidelines suggest that each school nurse be assigned to no more than 750 children, but 59% have more students than that in their care. In 11 states, including California, Colorado, Illinois and Michigan, the average school nurse cares for more than 2,000 kids, according to the nonprofit National Association of School Nurses. "As parents, many of us assume that because our schools each had a nurse when we were young, that this is still the case," says Gail Milgram, executive director of the Johnson & Johnson School Nurse Fellowship Program at Rutgers University. "In actuality, a lot of nurses today are working out of their cars, driving between schools."

Many kids with disabilities are now mainstreamed, so nurses are busy inserting feeding tubes or monitoring children with multiple handicaps. They also have to deal with the burgeoning population of kids with asthma or allergies, while overseeing a parade of students taking medications for attention-deficit disorder or depression.

About 20% of students today have medical issues that require regular encounters with a school nurse, says Amy Garcia, the nursing association's executive director. Though the group says it has no reliable historical statistics regarding school nursing levels and duties, the consensus in the nursing community is that the burden has increased considerably over the past two decades.

Through weeklong training sessions, the Rutgers program helps school nurses navigate some of their new responsibilities. At many schools, for instance, nurses must create medical-care plans to deal with school violence or terrorism. Based in part on the experiences of the nurse at Columbine High School, nurses in the Rutgers program learn to put together a "Go Box," in case they have to run from the school. It contains items such as a school map to help emergency responders, and medical information on students who might be trapped inside.

To cope with their workloads, many school nurses have stopped doing certain routine tasks. They call it "selective abandonment." Robin Harvel is a nurse at Fort Sam Houston Elementary in San Antonio, Texas. She used to screen all students' teeth for decay. "I don't have time to do it anymore," she told me in a phone interview this week. She then put me on hold because her office was crowded with students about to take a field trip to a pumpkin patch.

When she got back on the line, Ms. Harvel explained that 110 students were going on the trip. Twelve of them needed inhalers for asthma, three needed medication for cystic fibrosis, seizures or feeding-tube maintenance, and another with severe allergies had to get an EpiPen autoinjector to use in case of emergency. When Ms. Harvel became a school nurse 23 years ago, "I wouldn't be sending any kids out with inhalers," she says.

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Aware of the obligations school nurses face, some parents are getting proactive. They're lobbying school boards to protect nurses' jobs from budget cuts, or they're questioning whether school staffers are well-enough trained to give medical aid if a nurse isn't available.

Because of demand for nurses in hospitals and clinics, some schools can't even find nurses, and can't pay them what they can earn elsewhere. So parents are asking hard questions: Should a school fund, say, a top-notch football program when it can't earmark enough money to hire a qualified nurse?

Community activism can successfully combat a nursing crisis. In 2004, the Buffalo, N.Y., public school district laid off 46 nurses because of a county budgeting crisis. As a result, at one point, a skeleton staff of 13 nurses served 60 schools. In some schools, a nurse showed up for only 30 minutes a day. The district says there were no "serious consequences" as a result of the shortage.

Last year, the district scraped together funding for 28 nurses, but still, "nurses weren't able to screen for hearing and vision, do any health education, or monitor immunizations as closely," says Assunta Ventresca, director of health-related services for the Buffalo public schools.

Parents and community leaders in Buffalo pulled together to protest the cuts and find solutions. This year, \$5.2 million in state funding was allocated, placing a nurse in almost every school building.

In Mississippi, Ms. Amato, 60, vows to continue her activism until there's a nurse in every local school. The district hopes to receive funding by 2009 to achieve that goal, but for now, it is stymied by budget issues, says assistant superintendent Ed Mosley.

Ms. Amato says she has great faith in Kim Rivers, the nurse who serves Southeast Lauderdale Elementary. "I know she'd run a red light to get to my grandson. Miss Kim does everything she can. She just needs more help."