

Chapter 2: The Role of the Professional School Nurse

Chapter Contents

Nebraska's School Nurses

Certification

Sample Job Description

Scope and Standards of School Nursing Practice

Applying the Nursing Process in the School Setting

Delegation Topics

Supervision and Direction

Consultation Practice

Quality Improvement in School Nursing

Advocating for School Health Programs

Individualized Health Care Plans

Special Education and the School Nurse

Resources

Suggested references for the school nurse

Sample competencies for the school nurse

THE UNIQUE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

School nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success and life-long achievement and health of students. To that end, school nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety including a healthy environment; intervene with actual and potential health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self advocacy, and learning (NASN, 2010)

MAKING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HEALTH AND ACHIEVEMENT: NEBRASKA'S SCHOOL NURSES

The role of the school nurse is to implement school health services including acute, chronic, episodic, and emergency care, as well as health education, health counseling, and advocacy for students with disabilities (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001; American Heart Association, 2004). Physical health, mental health, and safety of children and youth are directly related to student achievement. The increasing incidence of chronic disease, behavior disorders and learning disabilities in the typical classroom has complicated the job of protecting and providing for students' health care needs during the school day (American Nurses Association, 2007). School nurses support student success by providing direct care; by providing a central management role for coordinated services to appraise, protect, and promote student health; and by fostering the inclusion of students with special health care needs. School nurses contribute significantly to the development of collaborations between schools and community health resources and services to benefit children and families (Centers for Disease Control/SHPPS, 2007).

What do School Nurses do?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2008) identifies the following seven core roles of professional school nurses:

- Provide direct care, supporting inclusion of students with special needs, developing and carrying out the individualized health care plan, serving as a health expert on the multidisciplinary/IEP team, and providing case management where needed.
- Provide leadership for the overall system of care in the school.
- Conduct health screening and referral.
- Help assess and promote a healthy school environment.
- Provide health promotion and health education.
- Provide leadership for health policies and program development.
- Serve as a liaison between school personnel, families, health care professionals, and the community, linking school health to healthy communities.

What are the activities of a School Health Services Program?

The overall goal of the school health services program is to contribute to the educational success, well-being, and lifelong health of every student. To accomplish this, school health services programs:

- Provide health screening and immunization monitoring.
- Control the spread of communicable disease.
- Provide individualized health care planning and direct care for children with special needs.
- Promote utilization of primary care and other community resources to promote health of children and families.

- Assure a healthy and safe school environment.
- Provide health education and health promotion activities.
- Provide a system for responding to crisis medical situations.
- Evaluate the health program periodically and identify new priorities and needs.

Are School Nurses “required” in Nebraska?

There is no law or regulation in Nebraska specifically requiring schools to employ a licensed nurse. However, a number of related regulations and statutes speak to the role of the licensed health professional at school:

The Medication Aide Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. 71-6718 to 71-6742 and Title 92 NAC 59, “Regulations for School Health and Safety) identifies the role of the licensed health professional in determining competency of unlicensed school personnel in administering medication at school.

School Health Screening Statutes (Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-248 through 79-253) require qualified personnel to conduct vision, hearing, dental/oral health, and other health screenings.

Nebraska Nurse Practice Act and Regulations (Neb. Rev. Stat. 71-1,132.01 to 71-1,132.53 and Title 172 NAC 99, “Provision of Nursing Care) prohibit the practice of nursing by any unqualified and unlicensed person under penalty of law. These laws and regulations require that only the Registered Nurse may make delegation decisions, determining when an unlicensed person may carry out nursing interventions as are provided at school with children with health conditions. Circumstances when an unlicensed person may not assume responsibility for interventions are also identified.

Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act requires states that receive federal funding under IDEA must provide “related services”, which include health services such as school nurse services that are a component of the child’s IEP. Related services encompass a broad range of health services. Services provided by a physician (other than for diagnostic and evaluation purposes) may be excluded, but services that can be provided by a nurse or qualified layperson must be covered. (NAC Title 92 Chapter 51 003.50)

Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act also obligate school systems to provide care to eligible children with disabilities using appropriately qualified personnel so these children may access public education.

What are the qualifications of a School Nurse?

A person using the title “nurse” or “school nurse” must possess a Nebraska license to practice nursing which is currently active and in good standing. Any member of the public can verify licensure information at the following website:

<https://www.nebraska.gov/LISSearch/search.cgi>

In Nebraska, the school nurse may be a Registered Nurse (RN) or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). In Nebraska, an RN is permitted to practice independently within the

regulated scope of practice. An LPN is not allowed to practice independently. If an LPN, the school nurse must assure a relationship is in place to provide supervision and direction for the LPN by a Registered Nurse, Advance Practice Registered Nurse, or Medical Doctor.

The school nurse may be prepared at the associate degree level, three-year professional diploma level, bachelor's degree level or higher. If an employing district requires the school nurse to obtain a special services certificate from the Dept. of Education, a bachelor's degree at a minimum is required.

Applicable practice settings that seem to translate well to the school setting include previous history of: emergency room nursing, ambulatory care, public health, mental health, and pediatrics. The nursing skill set relevant to school nursing includes: strong physical assessment skills, ability to respond to medical crisis, knowledge of pediatric chronic health issues (asthma, diabetes, severe allergy, seizure) strong oral and written communication skills, family-centered practice, knowledge of normal development age 0-21 years, the ability to work in a non-health care-centered multidisciplinary environment, and the ability to work independently.

A number of resources and activities are available to help the new school nurse become oriented to school health practice. For more information, contact the DHHS School Health Program.

For more information: <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/schoolhealth.aspx>

402-471-1373

7/13/3016

CERTIFICATION FOR SCHOOL NURSES

There are two types of certification available for school nurses:

Nebraska State Certification

The Nebraska Department of Education provides *permissive* certification via a School Nurse Special Counseling Services Certificate issued to registered nurses with bachelor's degrees or higher employed by a school system in Nebraska. For further information, please call the Nebraska Department of Education, Certification Division: 1-402-471-0739, or go to the NDE Certification webpage:

https://dc2.education.ne.gov/tc_interactive_ss/SpecialServicesNurse.aspx

National Professional Certification

The National Association of School Nurses, Inc. (NASN), the specialty organization, also certifies school nurses through the National Board for Certification of School Nurses, Inc. (NBCSN). The website is:
<http://www.nbcsn.org/>

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR A SCHOOL NURSE

In general, job descriptions are created by school districts for their employees. The scope of expectations for a school nurse is affected by whether the nurse is to be working full-time or part-time, assigned to one or more buildings, and whether responsibilities for staff wellness are included or excluded in the nurse's duties, just to name a few variables. However, the statements below provide some language to describe some of the more frequently-found school nurse duties in Nebraska.

Anywhere, Nebraska Public Schools Sample School Nurse Job Description

General Description: The primary function of the school nurse is to strengthen the educational process through improvement and maintenance of the health status of students. The school nurse participates in school-wide health and safety planning and promotion. The school nurse assumes responsibilities for the implementation and leadership of the school health program.

Qualifications: Professional Registered Nurse currently licensed to practice in Nebraska. Bachelor's degree in nursing or related field strongly recommended. Currently certified in first aid and CPR.

Experience: 3-5 years minimum experience in any one or combination of the following: pediatric nursing, emergency care nursing, public health, mental health nursing, school nursing.

Essential Functions of the School Nurse:

1. Practices professional nursing in accordance with the parameters and requirements of the Nebraska Nurse Practice Act, state and federal laws and requirements, school policies and procedures, and recommended best practices for the nursing care of children at school.
2. Provides direct care to students, staff, and patrons as needed.
3. Provide supervision, direction, monitoring, and competency determination for the school's medication administration program, in accordance with Nebraska's Medication Aide Act.
4. Provides health instruction for individuals and groups.

5. Collects and analyzes relevant information using appropriate assessment techniques.
6. Develops, in collaboration with parent/guardian and medical professionals, individualized health care plans for students with special needs.
7. Provides consultation, training, and instructions for school personnel regarding management of chronic health conditions and special health care needs at school.
8. Plans and conducts the annual health screening program.
9. Participates in school safety planning and emergency response planning at school. Provides consultation on planning for medical emergencies at school.
10. Maintains accurate health records, reports, and documentation.
11. Follows federal laws in protecting student privacy and confidentiality.
12. Collaborates with school administration and teachers in order to coordinate health services to complement the educational program
13. Assists in the development of policies and procedures to benefit student health and safety.
14. Identifies health issues and priorities to the school administrator.
15. Supervise the activity of the health office in a professional manner, assuring quality practices, accountability, accuracy, and confidentiality.

SCOPE AND STANDARDS OF SCHOOL NURSING PRACTICE

For a handout on the Scope and Standards of School Nursing Practice (Chapter 2 Power Point 1), return to the Guidelines menu.

For the National Association of School Nurses/American Nurses Association document on the Scope and Standards of School Nursing Practice, go to the NASN website at www.nasn.org.

Application of the Nursing Process in School Health

Characteristic of the practice of professional nursing is application of the nursing process, a systematic, logical, problem-solving framework that begins with assessment, information-gathering, and analysis. The nursing process forms the foundation for the nurse's decision-making and problem-solving. The nursing process is nowhere more necessary or evident than in the practice of school nursing.

The nursing process encompasses a sequence of steps that feeds back into itself for continuous quality improvement and adaptation to the needs of the client, school, or patient. The steps are: assessment, diagnosis/analysis, outcomes identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

When applied in a health office encounter, application of the nursing process results in documented assessment, interventions, and outcomes. When applied to the more complex needs of a child with special health care needs, the nurse creates an Individualized Healthcare Plan, or IHP. The nursing process can be applied to issues affecting the school community such as in emergency response planning. This will result in careful comprehensive contributions to written plans that will be used by key personnel.

Delegation Decisions in School Nursing Practice

While there is no “cookie-cutter” approach to planning for the needs of each individual child with special needs at school, essential information is found in the Nurse Practice Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. 71-1,132.01 to 71-1,132.53) and in Title 172 NAC 99, “Provision of Nursing Care”.

The Nurse Practice Act defines the practice of nursing as (among other criteria) including the execution of therapeutic regimens prescribed by any person lawfully authorized to prescribe. Title 172 NAC 99 Sections 004.01A through 004.01C clearly describe that only Registered Nurses licensed in accordance with the Nurse Practice Act may delegate interventions which can be performed by non-nurses. Individual tasks labeled as nursing provided in isolation by unlicensed persons functioning independently of the nurse is unlawful and constitutes the practice of nursing without a license. School employees who are assigned cares for children with medical needs as a function of their employment fall under the scope of the Nurse Practice Act

In brief, the regulatory guidance and the Nurse Practice Act for making delegation decisions looks specifically at distinguishing between non-complex and complex interventions.

Complex interventions are those which require nursing judgment to safely alter standard procedures in accordance with the needs of the patient/student; or require nursing judgment to determine how to proceed from one step to the next; or require the multidimensional application of the nursing process. Complex interventions may not be delegated to non-nurses.

Non-complex interventions are those which can safely be performed according to exact directions, do not require alteration of the standard procedure, and for which the results and patient/student responses are predictable.

Students who are not medically stable, who are new to the school environment (and consequently response to changing environments and exposures is unknown or unpredictable), and/or students who require complex interventions at school will require particular caution in your staffing decisions. When a child presents at school with medically-necessary cares that must be incorporated into the educational plan, a school nurse or other licensed Registered Nurse can be an essential asset in developing the plan of care, or individualized health care

plan (IHP), including identifying the responsibilities of unlicensed school personnel.

Many parents will express a desire for a trusted teacher or para-professional to participate directly in providing their child's nursing procedures, such as a tube feeding, catheterization, suctioning or other respiratory cares or treatments. This may or may not be feasible for the school to consider in any individual case. A registered nurse must be involved in the decision, because these procedures are to be provided at school, not home. Because the procedures will be assigned to a person as a function of employment by the school, the school is responsible for how the decisions of assignment are made and assuring state law and regulation are followed. Such decisions should be made lawfully for the safety and medical wellbeing of the student, and in accordance with the regulated practice of nursing in the state of Nebraska.

It should be noted that parents/guardians have the right to perform cares and procedures for their own child at school, and also to designate a person of their choosing or employment to come to school on behalf of parent/guardian to perform cares. The designee is a person whom parent/guardian will supervise and be fully responsible for – essentially removing school personnel from the duty to perform cares for the student. In such an instance, the school should act specifically to obtain in writing a release from the parent/guardian for the responsibilities of providing care to the child at the parent's request, and a written plan for how such cares will be provided in lieu of school personnel for inclusion in the child's IEP/504 Plan/IHP.

The regulations of 172 NAC 99 specifically do not apply to: a) persons who perform self-care; b) family, foster parents, or friends who provide home care; and c) persons performing health maintenance activities in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. 71-1,132.30. These regulations also do not apply to the provision of activities of daily living and personal care by unlicensed persons when such cares do not rise to the level of requiring the application of nursing judgment or skill based upon a systematized body of nursing knowledge.

The full text of 172 NAC 99 can be found at http://www.sos.ne.gov/rules-and-regs/regsearch/Rules/Health_and_Human_Services_System/Title-172/Chapter-099.pdf

It is important to note that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 includes school health services in the description of Related Services. If it is determined that the related services are needed for a child to benefit from his or her special education program, those services must be provided. School health services in IDEA are to be provided by a qualified school nurse or other qualified person. Examples of such services may include but are not limited to catheterization, giving medications, or writing an individualized health care plan.

For more information about nursing as a related service under IDEA, contact Beth Wierda or Jill Weatherly at the Dept. of Education. For more information about skills and procedures for students with medical needs, contact Carol Tucker or Kathy Karsting in the School Health Program in the Division of Public Health at Dept. of Health and Human Services. For information about the scope of nursing and pertinent laws and regulations governing practice, contact Karen Bowen in the Licensure Unit in the Division on Public Health at DHHS. All contact information is shown below.

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Making Decisions about Assigning Skilled Medical Procedures/Nursing Interventions at School: Guidance for School Nurses and School Administrators

I. What activities fall under the scope of “skilled medical procedures?”

A. Not all students with medical diagnoses or conditions require special interventions at school.

B. Special medical interventions required during the school day should be medically necessary, required in order to maintain the student’s health, safety, and ability to perform at school. Medical necessity is established by written authorization from the student’s health care provider. In some situations, it is valid to obtain and evaluate additional medical history on the student, with parent/guardian consent, in order to establish the medical necessity of the procedure or intervention. A licensed health care professional working on behalf of the school may be needed to assist administrators in evaluating this information.

C. The more common skilled medical procedures needed by Nebraska students include (but are not limited to):

1. Cares for students with diabetes
2. Medication administration by routes other than oral, topical, inhalation, and instillation. These additional routes may include: medications by gastrostomy tube, by injection (insulin, glucagon, clotting factors for hemophilia), or by rectal

- suppository (Diastat)
3. Urinary catheterization
 4. Gastrostomy tube feedings
 5. Tracheostomy cares including suctioning, removal of the trach for cleaning, and emergency replacement of the trach tube
 6. Invasive procedures of any type
 7. Procedures intended to be utilized on an as needed basis, which involve understanding the circumstances or indications when the procedure should/should not be implemented.

II. Considerations for School Administrators

A. Staff assignments and training

1. The delegation decision is made by a registered nurse.
2. The assignment may be outside the “usual” assigned duties of the educational personnel.
3. Additional specialized training is often required.
4. The designated staff member must agree to the responsibility of performing the additional assignment.
5. Sometimes gender and strength considerations apply (in delivering personal cares that may involve disrobing the student; in requirements to safely transfer and position the student).
6. There must be adequate planning for a trained and qualified substitute for the person primarily assigned.

B. Parent/guardian concerns

1. Parents of children with special needs will look to the principal to assign capable, responsive, agreeable staff to their child.
2. Parents/guardians often wish to have ongoing and frequent communication with their child’s assigned caregiver.
3. Parents/guardians will judge the adequacy of the care given their child and will communicate concerns or perceptions of shortcomings to the principal.
4. Building a relationship of trust and satisfaction between school and parent/guardian may face special challenges. It may take time for parents to feel confident the school is adequately prepared to provide necessary medical care at school for a child with special needs.

C. Legal/ethical considerations

1. The adequacy of delivery of skilled medical care at school can be the difference of life or death.
2. The child who is verified special education is protected by federal law, IDEA. The child’s individualized education plan must encompass related services if they are needed, the plan must address the child’s safety at school, and qualified personnel must be provided.

3. The child who is not verified special education but has needs for medical attention during the school day may qualify for accommodations by the school under section 504 of the Civil Rights Act.
4. Delivery of skilled medical procedures by an institution such as the school is a regulated act in the state of Nebraska. A reliable and appropriate process must be demonstrated in making decisions about staffing and assignment of such procedures in order to assure that neither parent/guardian nor school is practicing medicine or nursing without a license.

III. Parents provide these skilled cares. What difference does it make who does it at school as long as parent/guardian is satisfied?

- A. The delivery of skilled medical procedures in non-home settings is regulated by the state.
- B. A parent/guardian in Nebraska is permitted to learn the necessary cares for their own child, and carry them out themselves in home or other locations. When an organization such as a school assumes responsibility for these cares, a registered nurse is required to assess and delegate the cares to be provided, consistent with state laws and regulations.
- C. IDEA includes provisions for related services that require the services of a licensed nurse. It is not presumed in IDEA that unlicensed school personnel can or should carry out all care and services required by the student.

IV. What is the decision-making process for determining if a child's procedures can be assigned to a school teacher or para-professional?

- A. Obtain parent/guardian request/consent for the cares, including a complete description of what is to be done at school, and when.
- B. Obtain written authorization from a health care professional stating the cares are medically necessary and required for the student's safe and optimal participation in the educational experience.
- C. Obtain additional medical information if needed to understand how the student's educational program and performance will be affected by the condition and by necessary cares, and to obtain adequate medical direction on performance of the cares or procedures at school.
- D. Establish the plan of medical care at school. The activities and the procedures necessary to accomplish the plan of medical care are nursing interventions. Nursing interventions fall within the regulated scope of practice of nursing.
- E. The delegation decision is made by a registered nurse and includes determining which nursing intervention(s) may be delegated, selecting which unlicensed person(s) may provide the delegated interventions, determining the degree of detail and method to be used to communicate the delegation plan, and selecting a method of evaluation and supervision. Only licensed Registered Nurses may

delegate nursing interventions to be performed by others.

- F. When unlicensed personnel are assigned the responsibility of performing the procedures, this is an act of delegation, and is defined as “transference from an RN to an unlicensed person the authority, responsibility, and accountability to provide selected non-complex nursing interventions on behalf of the RN”
- G. Only selected non-complex nursing interventions may be delegated. Non-complex interventions are those which may safely be performed according to exact directions, do not require alteration of the standard procedure, and for which the results and patient/student responses are predictable (either results do not vary, or vary within a predictable range which can be identified in the plan).
- H. Complex nursing interventions may not be delegated to unlicensed personnel. These require nursing judgment to safely alter standard procedures in accordance with the needs of the student, or require nursing judgment to determine how to proceed from one step to the next; or require the multidimensional application of the nursing process.

V. If a school does not employ a school nurse, how are delegation decisions to be made by the school when a child with special health care needs enrolls?

- A. Delegation decisions require a Registered Nurse.
- B. Under Nebraska law, only the licensed Registered Nurse is qualified to make the necessary delegation decision and provide the required training and supervision if the cares are to be delegated to an unlicensed member of the school staff.
- C. Nothing in Nebraska law precludes the school engaging a registered nurse on a volunteer basis to perform these functions.
- D. An Educational Service Unit may be the source of information and guidance on accessing services of a Registered Nurse familiar with the school setting.
- E. A local health department familiar with the school environment may employ a nurse who can provide consultation to the local school for this purpose.
- F. The Department of Health and Human Services, School Health program, employs a Registered Nurse available for consultation on delegation decisions as well as other areas of school health practice.

Quality Improvement in School Nursing

A number of strategies may present themselves to the school nurse to assess and improve quality of the school health program, including the school-specific school improvement plan.

Additional opportunities may be found in: Developing school health data, including rate of return to class versus dismissal home from the health office; identifying school nurse competencies of interest and charting progress toward proficiency; joining and participating in national school nurse or school health professional associations; attendance at professional conferences; collaborating with multidisciplinary school teams to identify and address school priorities with a health component.

Advocating for School Health Programs

School leaders (administrators, principals, school board members) face multiple pressures and priorities in the name of educating children. Making the case for time, effort, and resources to be dedicated to school health is the challenge of the school nurse. Consider the following communication tips when framing a case for school health policies and practices.

- Be prepared to speak to your health topic in educational terms. How will your efforts help children succeed academically?
- What data underlie your statement of need, or proposal?
- How do health services complement or reinforce the instructional curriculum?
- Acknowledge that the health services program is one among many strategic demands on the school budget.
- Identify your professional assets to the school in a wider context than the health office: contributing to classroom instruction, parent communications, review of health materials, employee health promotion, safety and emergency planning and preparations, liaison to community social and health resources to help children and families.
- Craft professional communications that reflect your knowledge and preparation.
- Be informed about your school's improvement plans, and try to identify how health services can participate in achieving the stated priorities.
- Analyze health office data and trend information about children with special health care needs. Bring this forward-looking, data-driven knowledge to your interactions with school leaders.

INDIVIDUALIZED HEALTHCARE PLANS (IHPs)

The Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP): A Tool for Schools

I. Description

- A. The IHP is a written plan of care for the student with special health care needs which will
 1. Require attention and services during the school day
 2. Potentially create emergency or crisis situations at school

3. Impact the student's performance, presence (attendance), or inclusion at school.
- B. The purposes of the IHP are to
1. Communicate the health/medical/safety needs of the student while at school (inclusive of school day, field trips, and extracurricular activities)
 2. Specify emergency interventions to be made available to the student if needed (inclusive of the capacity to identify that such needs are emergent)
 3. Stimulate the professional nurse to consider the range of possible interventions to support student success
 4. Articulate the expected actions of school personnel having contact with the student, and expected outcomes.

II. **Who should develop the IHP?**

- A. For the student requiring the delivery of specialized care procedures at school, the Registered Nurse is responsible for developing the IHP.
- B. Only the Registered Nurse is qualified and credentialed in the state of Nebraska to assess and make delegation decisions that are inherent to the IHP (identifying the school personnel qualified to carry out the procedures and assuring they are competent to do so).
- C. Parent/guardian expectations and contributions to the written IHP are critical, both to assure student safety and wellbeing and in order to build an essential relationship of trust between school and family that the child's needs are adequately understood and will be met at school.
- D. In the multidisciplinary school setting, the contributions of the IEP or 504 Team must also be considered in order to assure the IHP will be effectively implemented by adequately informed and prepared school personnel, and well-integrated with the student's school day.
- E. All medical procedures and interventions including medications must be legally authorized in writing by a health care provider with prescribing authority. However, there is no specific requirement that the health care provider must review and authorize the IHP document.

III. **Major Components of the IHP**

- A. The IHP is student-specific.
- B. **Diagnosis or condition** stated in common terminology in order to inform school personnel about the underlying medical condition(s) resulting in needs for care.
- C. **Statement of assessment by the Registered Nurse**, updated periodically as the student matures and needs evolve. Such assessment may commonly include; statement of age, stage of development, cognitive ability, communication ability, mobility (including special evacuation needs in the event of school emergency).
- D. **Routine and predictable needs** of the student, described in detail that must be addressed during the school day. Specific step-by-step description of procedures/interventions should be included.

1. Specific school personnel who are to carry out the interventions should be identified (by role if not by name).
 2. The IHP incorporates (in direct text or by reference when creating a student-specific plan of care) generally accepted standards of nursing and medical care. This is generally achieved through building the IHP on a foundation of model IHPs for schools, or reference to standard nursing and medical resources.
 3. Expected outcomes of the routine care, or goals of therapy, are stated.
- E. Emergency cares/procedures/interventions**, described in detail, the student may potentially require, based on condition. Prevention and early intervention considerations most certainly can and should be noted. Expected outcomes of interventions, in order to facilitate problem-solving or recognition that the expected response is/is not achieved (and what to do next) should be articulated.
1. As with routine care and procedures, specific school personnel who are to carry out the interventions should be identified, by role if not by name.
 2. The indications – observable signs – that emergency interventions are needed should be described.
 3. The specific skills and/or interventions should be described.
- F. Promoting self-care:** The student’s age- and developmentally-appropriate needs for learning the skills of self care. Such needs may range from “communicating to an adult that s/he feels funny” to mastering independence and the self-management of a complex condition such as diabetes.
- G. Promoting normal psychosocial development:** Each student’s needs for age- and cognitively appropriate psychosocial development (needs for self-esteem, managing the impact of chronic disease on relationships with peers, addressing fears of uncertain future or sudden death). Development of this aspect of the plan draws heavily on family communication, family adjustment, family perceptions of priorities, etc.

IV. Documents Related to the IHP

- A. Parent/guardian written consent** for nursing interventions at schools. Sometimes the parent/guardian consent is incorporated into the document of the IHP, or in a standard form designed to elicit complete parent/guardian information about their child, or in separate forms specifically for the purposed of written consent/release.
- B. Medical authorizations** for all medications and interventions as directed by health care providers with prescriptive authority. Medical authorization must be in writing, and should be renewed when student condition changes or at the beginning of each school year.
1. The parent/guardian who indicates that their health care professional allows them to make decisions as to cares, dose changes, etc. must provide a statement of medical authorization from the health care professional with prescriptive authority which explicitly states that medical decisions are to be made “per parent”. Such authorization does

not relieve the school of responsibility to assure the medical prescriber is kept informed (by parent or school) of the progress of care or status of the child

C. **Procedural guidelines and relevant policies** for specific interventions, developed by the school or available from other sources, consistent with standards of practice and pertinent statutes in Nebraska are incorporated by reference or as supporting documents.

D. **Consent for release of information** in order to facilitate open communication between the school nurse, parent, and medical provider. Open communication facilitates both quality and continuity of the provision of the student's essential health care.

1. This component of the IHP is not required in order to implement the plan of care as long as parent/guardian is forthcoming with sufficient medical information and providing access to medical records or medical information upon request by the school.
2. In order to establish IHP, parents/guardians must fulfill their responsibility to provide adequate information, and/or to allow or provide access to sufficient medical information regarding their child, including medical history as requested and clarification of medical orders in order to complete the IHP to the school nurse's satisfaction. An IHP can (and sometimes must) be developed without parent/guardian input, but this is certainly not ideal.

V. **How does the IHP relate to a student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan)?**

A. The IHP should be named and referenced in a student's IEP, but should stand apart from the IEP. The rationale for this is twofold:

1. The IHP must be available to parent/guardian and school nurse to revise whenever the student's needs and condition change. The "rules" which govern how changes in the IEP are made by the IEP team must not limit or hamper the parent/guardian, medical provider, and school nurse in making changes in the IHP promptly as required/recommended.
2. The IEP team should have access to the IHP on request in order to address the related services component of the student's IEP. The IEP should be provided regular opportunities to review and discuss the IHP with parent/guardian and school nurse present.
3. There may be areas of "overlap" between the content of the IEP and IHP. For example, the school nurse writing the IHP should have the opportunity to understand how the student's needs to achieve knowledge and skills for self-care, and psychosocial needs, are addressed in the IEP. These areas of the student's planning should be addressed collaboratively to maximize benefit to the student.
4. Collaboration and coordination between IEP and IHP for a student will help build parent/guardian trust and confidence that the school appropriately understands and is committed to meeting the student's

health and educational needs at school.

VI. How does the IHP relate to a student's 504 Plan?

- A. For a student with health care needs at school who does not also qualify for special education under IDEA, the IHP may, in fact, serve as the basis or foundation of the 504 plan and may be adopted as such by the 504 team.
- B. The IHP provides a very important opportunity to establish the medical necessity and appropriateness of accommodations requested by the parent/guardian.
- C. Some students may need educational accommodations under Section 504, however, that are beyond the scope of the individualized healthcare plan, and these will need to be addressed in an expanded 504 plan. Examples of educational accommodations beyond the scope of an IHP may include, for example
 - 1. The student who may require accommodations during educational testing (a student with diabetes must be excused from a test if needed for blood sugar testing, food or fluids, or other interventions. The student must not be prevented from leaving the test if such cares are indicated; the student may require specific accommodations in order to resume or retake the test).
 - 2. The student may require accommodations during classroom activities (again, if the student's participation is interrupted due to medical needs, some parents may request specific accommodations in order to assure the child receives full educational benefit of the activity)
 - 3. The student may experience excessive absence due to the medical condition.

MORE RESOURCES

Recommended References for the School Nurse Bookshelf:

- 1. Heymann, D. Ed. Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, 19th Ed. American Public Health Association. 2009.
- 2. Lewis, Keeta DeStefano and Bonnie J. Bear. Manual of School Health. A Handbook for School Nurses, Educators, and Health Professionals (3rd Ed.) Saunders Elsevier: St. Louis. 2009.
- 3. School Health Alert (Ed.). School Nurse Resource Manual: A Guide to Practice. School Health Alert: Nashville TN. 2010.
- 4. Selekman, Janice (ed.) School Nursing: A Comprehensive Text. F.A. Davis: Philadelphia. 2013.

Professional Associations

National Association of School Nurses www.nasn.org

Nebraska School Nurse Association
<https://nebraskaschoolnurses.nursingnetwork.com/>

Central Nebraska School Nurses Association
<http://www.centralneschoolnurse.com/>

American School Health Association www.ashaweb.org

On-line Resources for School Nursing

Lincoln (NE) Public Schools Health Services website:
<http://www.lps.org/stuserv/health/>

MCH Library School Health Resource Brief
<http://ncemch.org/guides/schoolhealth.php>

Omaha (NE) Public Schools Health Services website:
<http://district.ops.org/DEPARTMENTS/CurriculumInstructionandAssessment/SpecialEducation/HealthServices.aspx>