

## School Health Screening in Nebraska

### Nebraska Summary:

In Nebraska, school health screening is addressed in Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-248 through 79-253. Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-248 specifically names hearing, vision, and dental screening. Other conditions may be prescribed by DHHS but are not specified in the statutes. In addition, Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-214 and 79-220 address requirements for physical examination and visual evaluation for school at certain grades. Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-249 provides the authority for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to promulgate rules and regulations regarding school health screening.

Current guidelines and recommendations for school health screening practices in Nebraska schools are found in the resource document, *Guidelines for School Health Services in Nebraska*, available from the DHHS School Health Program. Many national organizations and some federal agencies provide guidance to districts and schools in order to improve the delivery and quality of school health services, including the Maternal Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of School Nurses, the American School Health Association, and the American Nurses Association.

At the present time, considerable variation exists in Nebraska schools regarding: the timing of screening activities, personnel who screen, the grade levels screened, the screenings performed, and the methodologies employed. No statewide methods for data gathering, data analysis, or surveillance related to school health screening practices are presently in place in Nebraska.

### The purposes of school health screening:

- To identify the child who may be suffering from a condition significant to health or learning and recommend further evaluation to the parent/guardian.
- Provide the school with data on the extent to which students, individually or collectively, are impacted by conditions significant to child health or learning.
- Provide the means to monitor trends and developments (potentially an evaluation tool for school wellness policies).
- To inform community health assessment with objective data and the development of community-based wellness initiatives benefiting children and families at the local level.

### Basic principals and requirements of health screening include:

- The conditions to be screened for are relevant to health outcomes or learning performance in a significant way
- Frequency of occurrence is such that significant numbers of children are identified for evaluation.
- There is evidence that early identification and intervention improve outcomes.
- A reliable and cost effective method to screen is available
- Screening is not diagnostic of a condition. Screening identifies a pool of individuals who are to be evaluated further.
- A medical management plan is available for treatment of the condition

### **School health screening encompasses:**

- Preparation of: screeners, those to be screened, and the screening environment
- Privacy issues, for screening events as well as for results documentation and sharing
- Consistently and accurately applied methods of measurement
- Valid and reliable methods of measurement
- Rescreening protocols preceding referral to further validate the findings
- Accurate documentation of results
- Interpretation of results
- Effective communication of results to parent/guardian (Costs of evaluation based on referral warrant accurate screening results)
- Referral to available sources of care for further evaluation, or other strategies for evaluation and remediation (notably subject to a myriad of health care access issues at the individual family and community levels)
- Meaningful, valid, useful, aggregate information.
- Evaluation of the screening program.

### **A high-quality, successful, and meaningful school health screening program requires:**

- Development, distribution, and utilization of support materials
- School Administrator input and acceptance
- The screening program is relevant to local interests
- A feasible and efficient plan for implementation at the school building level
- The screening methods are implemented consistently, reliably, and accurately
- A method to manage screening data in individual, as well as aggregate, form
- Aggregate or de-identified data can be made available to stakeholders and interested parties.
- The program encompasses children aged 0-21 years
- The screening program addresses the needs of children with special health care needs.

### **A typical menu of school health screening may include:**

Hearing	Vision
Height	Blood Pressure
Weight	Physical Examination
Oral Health	Scoliosis
TB	Development