



SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH – LIFESPAN HEALTH SERVICES
www.dhhs.ne.gov/SchoolHealth

School Health Screening Rules and Regulations: Project Update for Stakeholders
July 28, 2010

In April 2010, Legislative Bill 713 became law, with the result of updating Nebraska's school health screening statutes. The relevant statutes for school health screening in our state are Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-248 through 79-253. Significant changes in the statutes as a result of the legislative bill include:

- Permitting episodic screening on a schedule that does not require screening every child in every grade every year for every condition.
- Removing the requirement that schools must complete screening by the end of the first quarter of the school year, instead indicating only that schools will conduct screening programs on an annual basis.
- Including reference to the role of the Department of Health and Human Services in making resources and methods available to schools in order that the data derived from screening can be made useful and meaningful.
- Clarifies that when a student transfers into a school, the school must confirm screening results are current and available, as opposed to requiring the school to screen that student immediately upon enrollment.

A steering committee convened on July 22, 2010 to launch a process for the development of rules and regulations pursuant to the authority to do so as found in Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-249. The steering committee is comprised of membership including DHHS personnel, school nurses, a pediatrician, a NE Dept. of Education representative, a school administrator, a local public health representative, and a parent/cultural representative. The purpose of the steering committee is to provide a process that allows stakeholder participation in the development and final adoption of rules and regulations for school health screening.

While rules and regulations for school health screening are important, they will not address all aspects of screening methods, referral guidelines, and data interpretation that are important to schools. As has been the case for many years, the School Health Program at DHHS produces detailed guidelines for schools that include description of recommended methodologies and practices to produce reliable, valid screening results. Many stakeholders will be interested and involved in guidelines revisions, serving as expert resources on such topics as vision screening, hearing screening, dental and oral health screening, and more.

Kathy Karsting, RN, School and Child Health Program Manager for DHHS, serves as contact person and facilitator for the rules and regulations steering committee. Contact her at kathy.karsting@nebraska.gov. Current members of the committee are: Kay Pinkley and Sue Spanhake (DHHS), Tammy Dean and Jan Thede (school nurses), Dr. Karla Lester (pediatrician), Julie Rother (public health), Brian Halstead (Dept. of Education), and Dr. John Skretta (school administrator).

Periodic updates will be shared with stakeholders as the steering committee develops key topics and a tentative timetable for regulation development.