

School Health Services Respond to the Obesity Epidemic



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Minnesota Task Force on Childhood Obesity

Workgroup 2

- **Education: Schools and childcare**

Recommendation

- **Support measurement system to track and monitor student health progress**

Explore options for tracking BMI in for monitoring and research purposes

Expand obesity risk factor monitoring measures in the school setting

Why School Health Services Exist?

- Keep student safe during the school day
- Provide **mandated** services
- Reduce **barriers to academic success**

School Health Funding

- Schools receive funding on a per pupil basis
- No line item for health
- When schools must make reductions the decision is most often to cut services/staff other than classroom teachers

Health Service Delivery Models

- **Continuum from: Schools with no health services to full-time school nurse**
- **Nurse to student ratio**

Public Health Nurse, RN (AD grad), LPN, health paraprofessional

Schools – public, charter, private; wide range of enrollment

Focus of School Health Services

Chronic Disease Management

- School health services focus primarily on accommodations for managing **individual** student chronic conditions during the school day
- Mandated by Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Chronic Disease Management

- Increasing numbers of children with special health care needs
- Increasingly complex health care needed during the school day

Asthma

Diabetes

Life-threatening allergies

Mental health

Other specific health care needs to attend school

Other Health Issues

- **Communicable Disease – individual and population**
- **Social – emotional needs**
- **Self-care skills**
- **Identification of resources**
 - lack of health insurance**
 - Barriers including transportation, language**

School Screening

- **Minnesota has no requirements for screening vision and hearing**
- **There is no state funding in Minnesota for school screening**
- **Many districts have cut vision and hearing screening due to budget cuts**
- **Height and weight measurement not routinely done across the state**

Prevention Activities

- **School nurses provide front line public health services**
- **Increasing recognition of the role school nurses can play in promoting child and adolescent health**
- **Increasing expectation for school health to be involved in preventing childhood overweight**

System Gaps

- **No infrastructure at the federal level within the Department of Education to support health services**
- **No position in the Minnesota Dept of Education**
- **Inconsistent levels of local public health support to schools**

School Nurse Organization of Minnesota (SNOM)

Membership Survey - 2006

Should SNOM support BMI Screening in schools

83% responded: **Only** with
additional resources

Minnesota School Nurse Survey*

- School nurses well positioned to assume a key role in school-based obesity prevention
- School nurses are interested in providing both primary and secondary preventive care
- Require preparation and support

*Dr. Martha Kubick, University of Minnesota

The Role of Schools in Preventing Childhood Obesity

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Address physical activity and nutrition through a Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP)

8 components

- **Nutrition Services**
- **Health Education**
- **Physical Education**
- **Health Services**
- **Mental Health Services**
- **Employee Health**
- **Environment**
- **Community Involvement**

The Role of Schools in Preventing Childhood Obesity

- 2** Designate a school health coordinator and maintain an active school health advisory council
- 3** Assess the school's health policies and programs and develop a plan for improvements
- 4** Strengthen the school's nutrition and physical activity policies

The Role of Schools in Preventing Childhood Obesity

- 5** Implement a high-quality health promotion program for school staff
- 6** Implement a high-quality course of study in health education
- 7** Implement a high-quality course of study in physical education

The Role of Schools in Preventing Childhood Obesity

- 8** Increase opportunities for students to engage in physical activity
- 9** Implement a quality school meals program
- 10** Ensure that students have appealing, healthy choices in foods and beverages offered outside of the school meals program

What Can School Health Services Offer

- Involvement on health advisory committees
- Assistance in implementing local wellness policies
- Advocacy for the importance of change in the school food environment
- Support for increased physical activity
- Assess school environment: **School Health Index** – assist in developing plans
- Assess individual students

Education Administration Concerns

- Interrupted class time – increased demands for improved academic outcomes as a result of **No Child Left Behind**
- Change in routine such as BMI screening alters the school mood
- Lack of funding and resources

Issues

- Screening requires a F-U and referral program including resources for care
- With as much as 18% of school age children above the 95th percentile, does screening make sense – would environment changes for the entire population be more appropriate?
- Parents ask – what does this have to do with their child's learning?

Issues

- **Cost to schools to manage the data**
- **Concerns about privacy**
- **Concern eating disorders – healthy lifestyles **not** height and weight measurements**

Summary

Schools have the population of children and youth

Need resources to do public health work

Need to determine what is appropriate in the school setting

- **Is school screening cost effective?**
- **Is school screening ethical?**

Conclusion

- **School nurses committed to supporting student health within the parameters of the educational system**
- **School nurses interested in collaborative efforts that address childhood obesity**
- **National Association of School Nurses addressing the role of the school nurse**

In-service and training

Assessment and referral

Resources

**Make a Difference at Your School
Key Strategies to Prevent Obesity**

www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/keystrategies

**School Nurse Role: Making a Difference
for Overweight Children, National
Association of School Nurses**

www.nasn.org

***Capacity for Schools to Respond to the
Obesity Epidemic
Ann Hoxie, CPNP, LSN, MS***

- **Are barriers to implementation of a childhood obesity program identified?**

Capacity for Schools to Respond to the Obesity Epidemic

Ann Hoxie, CPNP, LSN, MS

- **Can the existing infrastructure (personnel, finances, etc.) handle the recommended interventions (i.e. surveillance, referrals, etc.)**