



## President's Message

Montana Association of School Nurses

November 2, 2023

I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for your support and dedication to MASN. Your commitment and participation have been instrumental to the success of this organization, and I'm excited to share some important updates and insights with you in this message.

First and foremost, I'd like to emphasize my strong belief in the significance of active involvement in professional organizations, such as MASN, for nurses – especially school nurses - and the advancement of school nursing as a practice. As school nurses, we often find ourselves working in isolation or within small groups, frequently separated by vast geographical distances. This isolation can limit our ability to influence our respective communities effectively. However, when we unite as a cohesive and engaged group, our collective voices resonate powerfully and have the potential to make a substantial impact on our communities and even influence state regulatory bodies in ways that would be challenging for any one of us to achieve as individuals.

Participation in MASN offers opportunities to address various competencies as outlined in the American Nurses Association's (ANA) Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice. These competencies include advocacy, professional development, service to the profession, career growth, mentoring, and networking. Through our active membership in MASN, we not only strengthen our professional expertise but also contribute to the growth and development of the field of school nursing, while simultaneously expanding our own careers and benefiting from valuable mentorship and networking opportunities (American Nurses Association, 2021).

MASN has a strong history of advocacy and guiding legislation. The statistics collected and reported by MASN in 2012, 2015 and again in 2018 of the Montana School Nurse to Student Ratio and the State of School Nursing in Montana were invaluable for Senator Jon Tester to write the NURSE Act, which proposes to help rural and underserved schools hire more school nurses full-time. The Glucagon Law and Epinephrine in Schools legislation were heavily influenced by MASN, as well as the MT SBON Delegation Rules. The pandemic required all of us to shift our work focus almost singularly on public health. With the easing of these demands, we have an opportunity to redirect our attention toward improving school nursing in Montana. Let's collaborate to outline the changes we aspire to achieve.

My vision for MASN includes:

- Increase membership by a minimum of 10% in 2024, and again in 2025.
- Increase MASN conference attendance by 10% in 2024, and again in 2025.

- Update the MASN website to offer direct event registration and payment, direct purchase of MASN merchandise, and a long-term goal of housing webinars and on-demand educational opportunities.
- Have a MASN member from a rural and/or small district participate in the Montana Asthma Advisory Group, a project of the MTDPHHS Montana Asthma Control Program.
- Have a minimum of 2-3 MASN members collaborate with the American Lung Association and MTDPHHS to form a Stock Albuterol in Schools Working Group. Time is of the essence - BJ Biskupiak hopes to get this started by the end of the month.
- Capitalize on the heightened visibility school nurses garnered during the COVID pandemic to advance our missions.

I will soon be sharing opportunities for participation in MASN and state-wide initiatives relevant to school nurses. This information will be shared through our MASN Community on [SchoolNurseNet](#) hosted on the NASN website. Please consider sharing your expertise as we move forward in our mission to improve the health of students in our state.

On a fun note, congratulations to Courtney George, RN, and school nurse at Great Falls Public Schools for being named Montana's School Nurse of the Year 2023-24! She will be honored at the 2024 NASN Conference this summer with the other state and international winners on the main stage. Courtney does not seek the spotlight, but amazing work needs to be acknowledged and celebrated. Thank you, Courtney!

Finally, my thanks and gratitude go to the people around me who worked so tirelessly to get MASN to where it is now. Sue Buswell, Kathy Dragonfly, Dot Warner, and Linda Simon – you were inspiring mentors who helped me find my feet when I was a wobbling new school nurse. To Karen Graf and Erica Harp who graciously shared their rooms and let me tag around with you so I could attend my first NASN conference in 2022. You two got us through the worst of the pandemic. You are tremendous leaders. And to Heidi Nielsen and Amanda Spring who are willing to continue their work with MASN to help us grow and improve our relevance.

To all the MASN members and those who are considering joining, I look forward to the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with each of you.

My best to all of you. ~ Lisa



Lisa Flanagan, MSN, RN, NCSN  
President, Montana Association of School Nurses  
Term: 2023-2025

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." ~ Henry Ford

## References

American Nurses Association. (2021). *Nursing: Scope and standards of practice* (4th ed.). American Nurses Association.