



Aug 3, 2026

Dear Members of the Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teacher Association,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride for all that we have accomplished together. It has truly been a remarkable year of growth, collaboration, advocacy, and progress for our association.

One of our greatest achievements has been strengthening our organization by building a robust and engaged leadership team. The willingness of members to step forward, share their talents, and invest in the future of our association ensures that we remain strong and well-positioned to serve Rhode Island's school nurses for years to come.

This year also marked the exciting opening of our Lending Library, a resource created to support professional practice, lifelong learning, and the sharing of materials among our members. We have 5 full sets of CPR mannequins and 2 sets of Stop the Bleed limbs for members who have become instructors. The library reflects our commitment to ensuring every school nurse has access to tools that strengthen the education that we provide to staff, students, and our communities every day.

We have completed three phases of our grant project, an accomplishment that speaks to the dedication and perseverance of many volunteers. This work has expanded resources, built capacity, and continues to advance school nursing practice throughout Rhode Island. A big thank you goes out to Christina McLeod, who worked tirelessly as our paid Strategic Consultant under the grant to move many of these initiatives forward. Also a shout-out to Sounivone Phanthavong, Adolescent, School, and Reproductive Programs, Rhode Island Department of Health, and Linda Mendonca. As a team, we all supported the work that needed to be done to get RICSNA to where we are today.

Advocacy has also been a defining accomplishment this year, and through the diligence and persistence of our Legislative Committee, Rhode Island successfully passed the Seizure Safe Schools Bill. This legislation represents an important step forward in protecting the health and safety of students across our state. As implementation moves forward, we look forward to sharing additional information and resources with our members to support this important change. Other important legislation that you will hear more about is having emergency response plans for your schools.

Our New England Conference Planning Committee, chaired by Samantha Paquette, Christina McLeod, and Hannah Homs, is already hard at work with many of you, preparing for the RICSNA-sponsored May 2027 conference in Newport. Hosting this regional event is an exciting opportunity to showcase the outstanding work being done in Rhode Island while bringing together school nurses from across New England for education, networking, and professional growth. They have also set up a one-day conference in Newport on 10/03/2026 that will once again feature Professor David Geyer, who will focus his talk on students with medical complexities, specifically addressing the scope of practice, relevant policies, and Medicaid. His talk will also provide a high-level overview of G, J, and GJ tubes and central lines, while integrating his research on family experiences. This is a not-to-be-missed day packed with education, CEU's and networking opportunities.

I am especially proud that fourteen Rhode Island school nurses represented our state at the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Annual Conference in Las Vegas. Their participation brought new knowledge, fresh ideas, and national best practices back to Rhode Island. The conference, held June 29 to July 2 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, provided an opportunity for education on leadership, advocacy, and student mental health. I was invited to give a presentation at the Leadership Summit that is held a day prior to the full conference. My talk focused on our grant success and our increased membership. The conference included impactful keynotes from Dr. Kathleen Ethier and Gerry Brooks, as well as the unveiling of NASN's new brand and logo, representing the heart and dedication of our profession. I attended a very informative breakout session on Attendance. Recently, I met with representatives from RIDE, and new tools for school nurses are on the horizon to assist you in helping your students to be present and successful every day.

We are also fortunate to have strong national representation through our NASN Director, Amy Thomas, who serves on the NASN Board of Directors. During six full days of meetings and conference activities in Las Vegas, Amy worked tirelessly on behalf of Rhode Island and school nurses across the nation, ensuring our state's voice is represented in national conversations and helping shape the future of our profession.

Nicole Collins is heading up our new website development. This should be going live in September, and believe me - it's fantastic!! Along with so much more, the new website will be a site to view the newly designed Newsletter by Christine Barrett.

Each of these accomplishments reflects the goals of our association: developing leaders, promoting professional excellence, advocating for policies that improve student health, expanding educational opportunities, fostering collaboration, and strengthening the practice of school nursing throughout Rhode Island.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication, passion, and generosity of our members. Whether you volunteered your time, attended educational programs, served on a committee, advocated at the State House, mentored a colleague, or simply supported one another, you have helped make this a truly exceptional year. Moving forward, our treasurer, Jodi Perrin, is monitoring our finances and assures that we are in good financial shape as we move into the 2026 - 2027 school year.

As we look ahead, I encourage each of you to remain engaged, continue sharing your expertise, and invite colleagues to become active participants in our association. Together, we will continue to build on this momentum, strengthen our profession, and ensure that every Rhode Island student has access to high-quality school nursing care.

We have a new nominating committee headed by Nicole Collins, who will be actively looking for members to fill critical roles for the Organization. Our Board meetings will be scheduled on the 4th Thursday evening of each month if there is not a conflict.

The [schedule for Board Meetings](#) is as Follows:

1. September 24, 2026
2. October 22, 2026
3. November 19, 2026
4. December 17, 2026
5. January 28, 2027
6. February 25, 2027
7. March 25, 2027
8. April 22, 2027
9. May 27, 2027

If you have time to hop on a meeting, I encourage you to reach out and to log on and see what is going on. Most meetings are held by Zoom; however, we are going to try to do more work in person. Thank you for your

commitment to our profession and for the privilege of serving as your President. I look forward to all we will accomplish together in the coming year.

With gratitude,

Michelle, President RICSNA



NASN 2026 Las Vegas