*Date*

*Dear Senator or Representative……*

The health and safety of the students in the Maine Public Schools is in jeopardy. The School Nurse Consultant (SNC) at the Department of Education (DOE) has retired and the position has not been filled. The SNC provides leadership to all School Nurses to ensure safe, consistent, professional and coordinated care for the students in Maine. This is of urgent concern as there is no other resource within the DOE who can provide professional medical knowledge and guidance to the School Nurses of Maine.

School Nurses are the medical experts in an academic setting. They provide care for thousands of students with acute and chronic illnesses; such as, but not limited to; diabetes, asthma, allergies potentially causing anaphylaxis, seizures, mental health, gastrointestinal disorders requiring tube feeding, respiratory disorders requiring oxygen and medical care, substance abuse and addiction.

With recents reports of the demise of the Public Health System in Maine, School Nurses are on the front line in providing healthcare to Maine’s children. The leadership of the SNC is essential.

Per Maine Statute Title 20-A,6041:

The **School Nurse Consultant provides statewide nursing leadership, consultation and direction for coordinated school health care programs**. The School Nurse Consultant shall:

Serve as a **liaison** and **resource expert** in school nursing and school health care program areas for local, regional, state and national school health care provider and policy-setting groups;

*The SNC functions as the representative and school medical expert on State School Health Advisory Committee, other advisory groups and monitors and informs school nurses of current legislative issues pertaining to school health.*

Disseminate **Information**: Monitor, interpret, synthesize and disseminate relevant information related to school health care trends, school nursing practice, health-related policy changes, legal issues in school nursing and school health care program implementation and professional development; *Examples of issues the SNC guided the Maine School Nurses in are: Concussion care and management, seizure care management and medication safety, legislation regarding Epi-pen training and Medical Marijuana in the school setting, School Located Vaccine Clinics, including the H1N1 crisis, (no pediatric deaths were reported in Maine), asthma management, and many more countless issues. In addition to the above, the SNC provided weekly updates and monitors the school nurse listserv.*

Provide **Staff development.** Foster and promote staff development for school nurses by planning and providing orientation, educational offerings and networking with universities and other providers of continuing education to meet identified needs; *The SNC is the only medically oriented professional from the DOE to provide professional development for School Nurses. This education is though various formats, including New School Nurse Orientation, The Summer School Nurse Institute ( a 4 day conference at Bates College), Spring and Fall Conferences, etc .*

Maintain **Standards**. Gather and Analyze data relevant to the school health care program and monitor standards to promote school nursing excellence and optimal health of school children. *The SNC collects annual data from the School Nurses and uses this in developing educational programs and policies. The SNC also updates and maintains the School Health Manual, which provides standards of care and is available as a resource to all the school nurses.*

**We are requesting your support to immediately address the vacant position of School Nurse Consultant for the State of Maine.** The SNC position provides consistent direction and leadership for the 347 certified School Nurses who provide daily health care to the over 172,000 students in the State of Maine. We respectfully request a task force to be formed immediately, coordinated by the DOE and the leadership of the Maine Association of School Nurses.

Sincerely yours,

Definition of school nursing according to the National Association of School Nurses:

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School nursing, a specialized practice of public health nursing, protects and promotes student health, facilitates normal development, and advances academic success. School nurses, grounded in ethical and evidence-based practice, are the leaders that bridge health care and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design systems that allow individuals and communities to develop their full potentials.

Definition of School Nurse Consultant/NASN

<https://www.nasn.org/Portals/0/statements/resolutionconsultants.pdf>