Greetings ASNC Members,
….and since this newsletter has public access on our website, perhaps I am also greeting potential members – if so, please appreciate the value we bring to our profession by joining our collective voice.

I hope everyone is finding our website useful, our educational programs productive, and our advocacy strong. I, and future Presidents and Board members, always welcome your feedback, comments, and concerns. Please let us know if you have suggestions or need help.

One of our ongoing legislative challenges has been addressing the issue I highlighted in our last newsletter: **The number of School Nurses any district in CT is required to have.**

In the past week I’ve met with Superintendents and multiple legislators. It’s clear that the opposition to supporting a minimal school nurse-to-student ratio of 1:750, which the School Nurse Advisory Council has recommended to the Public Health Committee again this year, is that it is an “unfunded mandate”. I’ve been asked “what exactly is it you are trying to achieve?” – which has caused me to reflect on our goal and strategy. Here’s the answer I’d like to share with all of you, and I hope you will share as well:

“There are still thousands of students who come to school every day without a school nurse present. We want every student in CT to have access to a school nurse to assess their acute and chronic health problems and promote their safety every day they are in school. Otherwise, a principal or teacher needs to this and they are not educated or licensed to make safe and effective health assessments and treatments. Not having a school nurse jeopardizes the safety of students and hinders their academic achievement.”

As we prepare to address more legislation that is asking for unlicensed school staff to administer emergency medication, we should be addressing these two issues together. We want students to have access to emergency medications, but school nurses must remember their legal responsibilities when delegating medications – I fear that too many have had to compromise this process for the sake of the system they work in: **The registered nurse retains responsibility for the total nursing process and for its outcomes in all situations where delegation has occurred** (Connecticut Board of Examiners for Nursing, 1995, accessed from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2663&q=334198#delegation). When I hear stories about principals administering asthma inhalers incorrectly, not knowing to give an EpiPen during an allergic reaction following a known ingestion, and students not getting their medication on the days when there’s no nurse, I become very concerned that a school nurse on some level may be held legally responsible. And when I hear that children are sent home or to the E.D. because a principal doesn’t know if it’s safe for them to return to class, I know they are not getting the same access to their education as they would if a nurse were there doing what she is trained and licensed to do.

This “unfunded mandate” is a very real barrier, but this issue is a very real problem. Please promote the dialogue and ask your superintendents, mayors, and legislators to become part of the solution.
Becoming a Nationally Certified School Nurse

Editor’s Note: The following information was obtained from the website of the National Board for Certification of School Nurses, Inc. (http://www.nbcsn.org). This is an independent organization that develops and implements the voluntary certification process for school nurses, and works in collaboration with the National Association of School Nurses.

Have you ever thought about becoming a Certified School Nurse? The National Board for Certification of School Nurses (NBCSN) endorses the concept of voluntary certification by examination for all eligible school nurses by providing an ongoing, quality credentialing process. Certification represents a national standard of preparation, knowledge, and practice. Currently, about 3,330 nurses have earned this designation in the United States, with North Carolina, Massachusetts, and Texas being the top 3 states with the largest concentration of Nationally Certified School Nurses (NCSN).

The certification examination is offered in a computer-based format at testing centers across the country, and is given at the same time throughout the US. It contains a maximum 250 multiple-choice, objective questions, with a total testing time of 4 hours. It is weighted in approximately the following manner:

- 27% Health Appraisal
- 28% Health Problems and Nursing Management
- 20% Health Promotion/Disease Prevention
- 13% Special Health Issues
- 12% Professional issues

Eligibility

Eligible candidates must:

1. Submit a copy of their license as a registered nurse (RN) in one of the United States.
2. Submit an academic transcript or proof of current certification, demonstrating attainment of one of the following:
   a. A bachelor’s degree or higher in nursing, or the equivalent in other countries
   b. A bachelor’s degree or higher in a health-related field relevant to school nursing, including or in addition to, a total of six (6) credits for undergraduate or graduate courses in any combination of the following subjects:
      i. Management of primary health care problems of children and/ or adolescents
      ii. Health assessment of children and/or adolescents
      iii. Public health/community health/epidemiology
   c. Current certification by NBCSN as an NCSN.
3. Meet the clinical practice requirements of a minimum of 1,000 hours that have been worked within the three years prior to taking the test. 1000 hours is roughly equivalent to the hours worked by a full time school nurse who works at least 6 hours/day for a school year of 180 days. See below for more information about clinical practice requirements.
4. Complete the online application to take the certification examination for school nurses.
5. Pay the required $350 fee.

Clinical Practice Requirements for Certification

Clinical Practice in school nursing means actively employed or contracted to provide a direct or indirect professional contribution to the health and education of students and their families in public or private school settings.

Direct clinical practice in school nursing is defined as involvement in the nursing process in a school setting where the nursing actions and judgments are focused on a particular student, family, school community, or
Exam Administration & Fees
The exam is administered for NBCSN by Prometric, which provides the testing site and conducts the exam. **Nonrefundable Application fee - $350.00**

The *Handbook for Candidates* is being updated for 2015. Check back soon (at http://www.nbcsn.org) for availability.

Scheduling Your Examination Appointment
Once NBCSN has processed your application and has determined that you have met all eligibility requirements, you will be notified by email with your Authorization To Test (ATT). Your ATT email will include all of the information you will need to schedule your testing date and location within your testing window. You cannot schedule your exam until you receive this ATT communication. If you have not received your ATT within one week of submitting your application, contact NBCSN at 844-808-6276 or certification@nbcsn.org.

Appointment times are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. It is recommended that you schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your ATT email in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date. It is your responsibility to contact Prometric at http://www.prometric.com to schedule the exam appointment.

Test Dates
The exam is held periodically throughout the year. It is offered at various locations throughout the country.

The exam will be available during three testing windows in 2015:

- **Winter/Spring Testing Window:** February 22 - March 7
- **Summer Testing Window:** July 12 - August 1
- **Fall Testing Window:** October 18 - October 31

The application cutoff date is 30 days prior to the start of the testing window.

The Role of the State Liaison
The purpose of the NBCSN State Liaison Program is to promote the NBCSN Certification on the state level. Each state may be represented by one or two liaisons. In Connecticut, our liaison is Pat Krin APRN, MSN, FNP-BC, NCSN, FNASN. She can be contacted at patkrin@snet.net.

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**Indirect clinical practice** in school nursing is defined as involvement that:

1. Includes clinical supervision of school nurses, education and clinical supervision of baccalaureate/master's nursing students in school health, administration of school health services, research, consultation or other engagement in the field of school nursing that contributes to the specialty’s body of knowledge or enhances the quality of school nursing practice;

2. Entails continuing professional responsibility and accountability for the outcomes of the involvement.

**Not eligible as clinical practice** in school nursing includes: substitute nursing in a school, except as a full time substitute working consecutive days for the required clinical practice hours; one-to-one nursing as the nurse’s sole responsibility within a school; employment in the direct sales, marketing or distribution of school nursing-related products or services in pharmaceutical, technology or other school health-related industries; community health screenings; work in a camp setting; preceptorship/mentor; and jobs unrelated to school nursing.

**Eligibility versus readiness to take the exam** The NBCSN board advises that eligibility should not be confused with readiness. Some school nurses may be prepared to take the exam after 1000 hours of acceptable clinical practice, while others may require many more hours of experience and preparation.

Factors that may affect an individual’s readiness include:

- level of education
- formal coursework in school nursing and education systems
- nursing experience prior to school nursing (e.g., child and adolescent primary care and public health versus adult inpatient nursing)
- exposure to child health in age ranges outside of school assignment
- continuing education supervision by a school nurse administrator on the job reference materials
- formal or informal mentoring professional development and professional leadership provided within the school district and state.
Recertification Procedures

All NCSNs are required to renew their certification in order to demonstrate that they have kept current with new practices, methodologies, equipment, medications, and terminology in the specialty of school nursing. School Nurse certification is granted for a period of five (5) years at which time the certificant must either retake and pass the Certification Examination for School Nurses, or meet current continuing education and recertification requirements.

Certified school nurses are notified one (1) year in advance of the expiration of their certification. Candidates for recertification must meet current eligibility requirements and submit appropriate documentation to demonstrate that criteria are met. These include:

- A copy of the applicant's current RN license.
- Employment in school health or related services with a minimum of 2000 hours of clinical practice in the area of school nursing during the past five (5) years, at least 750 of which must be in the prior three years, defined further below.
- Payment of required fees, $240.00.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to maintain active/current address and contact information with the NBCSN. Deadlines missed due to forwarded and lost mail are the responsibility of the candidate and may incur late fees or forfeited recertification status.

What type of continuing education credits are acceptable for re-certification?

To apply for recertification through continuing education, 75 hours of continuing education (CE) related to school nursing practice must be reported. These hours of CE must be related to the practice of school nursing, sponsored by an approved national or state accrediting agency, and must have been completed during the five (5) years prior to the expiration date of the candidate's certification. Continuing education programs may include workshops, seminars, professional development offerings, on-line courses, and state or national conferences that are related to the specialty practice of school nursing and approved by a national or state accrediting body.

CE hours may be accumulated in any combination of the following:

- Continuing Education Credits

All contact hours must be in subjects related to school nursing practice and approved by a national accrediting agency, state department of health or education, accredited universities or colleges, etc. These may include workshops, seminars, professional development offerings, and state/national conferences. Online courses, teleconferences, and "webinars" are acceptable, provided they are approved by a national or state accrediting agency.

Single-offering courses, seminars, workshops or conferences listed as twenty (20) hours or greater must be accompanied by a course outline or content agenda attached to the recertification application.

For conferences with multiple concurrent sessions, each session attended must be identified individually on the certificate or agenda.

Self-paced or online CE programs are acceptable for credit if approved by one of the accrediting organizations recognized by NBCSN.

Courses that are considered basic nursing preparation or staff development are not accepted.

Activities NOT ACCEPTABLE for continuing education credit include:

- Basic CPR, first aid, blood-borne pathogens training and other state certification and screening courses, such as vision, hearing, Acanthosis Nigricans, spinal assessment, etc.
- PALS, ATLS, ACLS will be accepted for credit only one time during the five-year recertification period.
- Basic computer technology courses, such as Windows, Word, Excel and PowerPoint, including computer training for district specific record keeping.
- In-service programs that provide specific information about the work setting's philosophy and procedures, including orientation to a work setting, department and district staff development courses, workshops and committee meetings—unless pre-approved by an accredited provider.
- On-the-job training and equipment demonstration. Refresher courses designed to update knowledge. Courses that focus on self-improvement, changes in attitude, self-therapy, self-awareness. Personal weight loss, yoga or personal appearance, etc.
- Economic courses for financial gain, such as investments, retirement, preparing resumes and techniques for job interviews.
Liberal Arts course in music, art, philosophy, etc, when unrelated to patient/client/student care.
Courses for lay people.

**Academic Credits**
Academic courses must be taken within the framework of a curriculum that leads to an academic degree in nursing or any academic course relevant to nursing practice. An academic course taken for credit may be used to meet NBCSN requirements if a grade of "C" or better or "pass" on a pass/fail system is achieved.

Each individual academic credit, from an accredited institution of higher learning, will be considered as ten (10) contact hours.

A transcript of successful completion of each course must be submitted with recertification documentation.

On-line academic courses from accredited institutions will be accepted.

Prerequisite courses, such as mathematics, government, anatomy, physiology, languages, literature, etc. cannot be accepted to meet any part of the continuing education requirements for a registered nurse.

**Miscellaneous activities**
The NBCSN recognizes and supports endeavors that promote and enhance the role of the certified school nurse and grants credits to non-academic or typical continuing education events.

Additional activities are listed on the Recertification page and in the recertification guidelines, and can be accessed at www.nbcsn.org/recertification.

All courses are subject to review. Applicants may be requested to demonstrate how the course content promotes expertise in school health or is relevant to school nursing practice.

All CE information must be added to your individual online NCSN account, which is the first step in the online recertification application process. You will need to include the date, program title, CE provider or sponsor (i.e. approved national or state accrediting agency), and the number of CE hours awarded. If you have not already done so, you can contact certification@nbcsn.org or call 844.808.6276 (toll free) to find out how to sign into your own account where you can add CE programs as you attend them, change contact information, and complete the recertification application when it is due.

Certified school nurses need to select courses that help to ensure their continuing competence in school nursing. This is not to limit a school nurse from taking any course for re-licensure, but courses submitted for NCSN recertification must be related to the specialty practice of school nursing. Continuing competence in school nursing may require continuing education in a wide range of content areas related to school health, including pertinent topics in medicine, sociology, psychology, and education that provide content related to the knowledge and skills required today of a competent school nurse. Documentation of attendance at any course should include the number of contact hours and the name of the accrediting provider, such as the ANCC (American Nurses Credentialing Center), CME (Continuing Medical Education organization), university, etc.

For more detailed information to learn how to become a Nationally Certified School Nurse, please visit http://www.nbcsn.org

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**NASN ELECTIONS 2015**
The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) will be holding elections for the positions of President-Elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and Nominating Committee. All active members, and those with an Honorary classification will be eligible to vote. If you are a current member of our local affiliate, the Association of School Nurses of CT (ASNC), you are automatically eligible to vote. Online voting will begin on March 15, 2015, and will end on April 15, 2015. While online voting is preferred, you may also contact Ms. Devin Dinkel at Ddinkel@nasn.org if you desire a paper ballot. You will be required to give your name, mailing address, and NASN ID number. The names of the candidates are as follows:

**President-Elect**
Donna Kosiorowski, MS, RN, NCSN (from Connecticut)

Nina Renee Fekaris, MS, BSN, RN, NCSN
Brochures with further details on all the candidates can be found on NASN’s website at www.NASN.org. We wish all the candidates the best as they go forward with their campaign!

**New England School Nurse Conference**

We are very pleased to announce that ASNC will be hosting the New England School Nurse Conference (NESNC) in the spring of 2016. The NESNC will be held Friday, April 29th thru Sunday May 1st, 2016 at the Mystic Marriott Hotel and Spa in Groton, CT. The Hotel and Spa is conveniently located just off of I-95 near historic Mystic Seaport. If you choose to attend, desirable and family friendly CT coastal attractions are at your fingertips including Olde Mystic Village, Mystic Aquarium, and USS Nautilus. Additional attractions include shuttles from the hotel available to either Mohegan Sun or Foxwoods Casinos. For you shoppers, let’s not forget the awesome shopping down I-95 at the Westbrook and Clinton outlets!

Our projected attendance is approximately 250 School Nurses and their families from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The 2016 NESNC will provide training and networking opportunities and a chance to build on the dedication of school nurses who strive to improve the health of students.

Planning for an event of this magnitude is like planning for a wedding on a very grand scale… we need your help. Please join our group, learn from doing, sharpen your saw, and let’s make this a conference to remember! Join all nurses for an event that starts with a smile and a handshake and networking like never before!

All levels of volunteer experience are welcome. Maybe try something new and get involved. All that really matters is that we appreciate anyone’s volunteer efforts and could use everyone’s help.

This is an all call for potential Chairpersons and Committee members:

**Marketing Committee Members:** Conference brochure, Welcome gifts for 2016 Conference.

**Speakers-** Chairperson and group to obtain contracts from and organizes speakers.

**Vendors-** Obtain contracts and organizes vendors.

**Sponsorships-** Obtain and organize sponsorships that are regionally recognized.

**Poster Presentation-** Receive and review abstracts and assist with presentations.

**Hospitality-** Help in the hospitality suite on Friday night and speaker introductions.

**Registration-** Create binders and name badges for attendees and assist with registration Friday thru Sunday,

**Tablescapes-** Chairperson and group to identify theme and secure all items for tablescapes.

**Basket Committee members-** Sell raffle tickets for baskets, organize district baskets, prepare State basket:

- **District baskets-** Each district provides a basket for Raffle. All proceeds go to ASNC.
- **State Basket-** States basket’s proceeds go to NESNC.

The countdown continues and we are so excited! If you are interested in helping, please visit our ASNC website at: www.ctschoolnurses.org

Or email inquiries to:

**Chlo-Anne Gonsalves:**
cgonsalves@wethersfield.me

**Roseanne Bucknam:**
rbucket@npsc.org
**ASNC WINTER DINNER MEETING**
Annette Sauerbrunn RN, MPH

Our winter dinner meeting was originally scheduled for January 28th, but blizzard “Juno” had other plans for that night! A snow date was planned, so it was held the following evening at Zandi’s in Wallingford. Originally, Jennifer Hixson DHSc, PA-C was scheduled to speak about orthopedic injuries, but due to an emergency, she had to cancel. Fortunately for us, our very own Michael Corjulo, APRN, CPNP, AE-C and ASNC President, stepped right up and presented a comprehensive program about Trends in Pediatric Asthma and Allergy. It's not often that we have the benefit of having a speaker who is both a school nurse and a healthcare provider! The end result was that we learned so much useful, practical and relevant information that we could all apply to our daily practice. Michael began by showing a short video of a rather historic moment for CT school nurses: the July 2014 ceremony of the signing of the Epinephrine Bill (PA 14-176), which addresses the storage and use of Epinephrine in CT public schools, with Governor Malloy and Michael in attendance, along with several others.

We were also able to explore the new website of the CT General Assembly, thanks to Donna Kosiorowski’s helpful tutorial. Viewers are now able to easily track bills, find local legislators, learn about past and current legislation, view scheduled events, and so much more. School nurses may find the information on the Education Committee of particular importance. For more information, please visit [www.cga.gov](http://www.cga.gov).

All in all, it was a wonderful evening. The buffet dinner was filled with a wide assortment of delicious offerings—baked stuffed shrimp, beef tenderloin, lemon chicken, twice baked potatoes to name just a few. There were vendors offering helpful information on Epinephrine, Quick Clot, and even a beautiful assortment of handmade silk and woolen scarves, gloves and hats. The camaraderie, networking, and educational offerings were greatly enjoyed, and we look forward to the next meeting in the spring. Stay tuned for more information……

**Why can’t we provide refunds for meetings?**

We sometimes get requests for refunds for dinner meetings when an attendee cannot attend for some reason or another. When we plan a meeting requiring a venue and food we base our costs on a number of things: the cost of the venue, the cost of the speaker and the cost of the food including service charge and taxes. We base our entrance fee on all of those expenses. The venue or caterer requires that we give them the guaranteed number of attendees a certain number of days prior to the event and we are required to pay them based on that guaranteed number plus any additions. In other words, if we tell them we will have 95 people and only 90 attend we still have to pay for 95 people.

In order to keep the cost of our meetings down, we try to keep our cost to attendees close to our actual costs so there is little wiggle room between what we charge and what we pay. Our suggestion if you are unable to attend is to try to find someone to replace you at the meeting. If you find a replacement to attend in your place we would be able to refund your money once they have paid.

**Seeking Our Award Winning Nurses…**

In an attempt to update our listings of awards on our website, please send us your information on any nursing or community awards that you may have received, and the year you received them. We need to update our archives, support one another, and recognize our accomplishments! Feel free to include any additional information that you’d like to share with us.

Kindly send your information via e-mail, to map_rn@yahoo.com.

Mary Anne Porto, RN, BS, NCSN
Member at Large

**News from National Association of School Nurses (NASN)**

The following Position Statements have been approved by the NASN Board of Directors in January 2015:

- Immunizations
- Individualized Healthcare Plans: The Role of the School Nurse
- The Complimentary Roles of the School Nurse and School Based Health Centers
- School Nurse Workload: Determining Staffing for Safe Care
- The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: The Role of the School Nurse
- Unlicensed Assistive Personnel: Their Role on the School Health Services Team

NASN position statements are available at: [http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatements](http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNPositionStatements)