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School Nurses Rock at the 2019 Annual PASNAP Conference

By Lori Kelley, MSN, RN, CSN

The school nurses of Pennsylvania could not have shone more brightly than they did at The 2019 Annual Conference, "School Nursing: Elevating the Standard". School nurses from across the state engaged in learning and collaboration that would make anyone proud to be a school nurse.

The fantastic weekend began on Friday with the pre-conference sessions. School nurses were able to fulfill license obligations with the child abuse and neglect session, or they learned about confidentiality and relationship abuse issues for adolescent students. Once the day was done, attendees had the opportunity to network, brainstorm and collaborate to find solutions for problems affecting the regions at the region meetings. There were dynamic conversations and innovative ideas shared.

The tone for the entire conference was set by Janice Selekman DNSc, RN, NCSN, FNASN and NASN President, Nina Fekaris, MS, BSN, RN, NCSN. Dr. Selekman presented on chronic illnesses, beyond the skills. Her presentation was informative and touching. Many of the nurses were in awe of her. It was clear that we were in the presence of school nurse greatness! Nina followed Janice and spoke of the importance of the school nurse “voice”. She discussed the importance of advocacy utilizing the NASN framework. The PASNAP board was excited and proud to have both of these amazing women at the conference.

After the well-received breakout sessions, we enjoyed a fantastic meal and were all inspired by the amazing work of our award winners. We all hope to emulate their dedication and hard work! In addition, many of the attendees won amazing baskets in the legislative action, which raised $3100 for our PAC fund. The fun did not end there!

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Growing Up Great by Shenessa Rossetti RN BSN CSN

Recently while I was preparing for my “Growing-Up Great” talk with my 5 and 6th graders, I came across some good resources and information, which I thought may be helpful to share with my fellow PASNAP members. Like many of you one of my favorite parts of being a Certified School Nurse is co-teaching with my staff.

Why do I love co-teaching in the classroom? I love it because it provides me with an opportunity to connect with my students and staff when they are not sick or hurt, and having access to the right materials can make the experience an enjoyable one for all involved. Every 3-5 years I research my current puberty education material to make sure that I have the most updated resources available. Since this is a topic that does not change to quickly, I have found that this is a pretty good rule of thumb to follow. However, this practice of updating material routinely is an important one. When I first started my current position 17 years ago I had to wait for catalogs or flyers in the mail and maybe get lucky finding something current on the internet. Today we still have those but now we have You-Tube, and our professional related organizations and their discussion board to name a few more.

So what did I find this year when I did my research? I found that many of our School Nurses, Health and PE teachers, and

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A Message From Our President

Kathy Verbel, M.Ed, BSN, RN,NCSN

Who could believe that two years could have gone by so fast? It has been a privilege and an honor to serve you as the President of the Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners. Much has happened in these last years affecting our students and communities. One outcome from these events is the spotlight that now shines on school nursing. School nurses are being recognized in their communities, by the media, and in legislation as having a positive impact on their students. The vital role school nurses play in schools has been publicly acknowledged, as the presence of school nurses in school buildings became a term in the recent CA collective bargaining agreement.

Don’t loose that momentum! Speak up. Share your students’ victories and the role YOU played in helping them get there. Never forgot, as a school nurse, YOU are an invaluable resource to the students, schools and communities in which you work. With your knowledge and expertise, you improve the lives of the children and families you meet daily.

Our days can be hectic. It’s easy to get drawn into those inevitable daily challenges, which may take a toll on you both physically and emotionally. Mark your calendar. Make sure to set some time aside on National School Nurse Day, Wednesday, May 8th as a day to celebrate your fellow school nurses and YOU.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

In summary, I have valued the opportunity and experience of serving as your PASNAP President for the past 2 years. As I ready myself to transition into the role of Past-President and the new responsibilities it entails, please welcome and give your ongoing support to our incoming President, Lori Kelley. She will assume her new role in PASNAP September 1, 2019.

With gratitude,

Kathy Verbel
After the awards dinner, the nurses were able to share some Penn State Creamery ice cream and dance the night away at an ice cream social dance party. It was an excellent opportunity to network and make new friends!

Finally, on Sunday, Morgan Plant, our Lobbyist, kept us abreast on the important happenings in Harrisburg, coming full circle from Ms. Fekaris's presentation regarding the importance of the school nurse “Voice”. In the final presentation, Jill Coedgo answered questions and clarified issues from the perspective of the PA DOH. It is hard to believe that we are able to fit all of that into one weekend, yet we did even more…

PASNAP was able to far exceed our goal of donating 300 items to the Center County Women’s Resource Center, an organization that provides: “Help... for women, men, and children who have experienced dating & domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.” School nurses were given the opportunity to impact others positively and once again rose to the challenge.

As an added bonus, due to the generous donation from PA EMS FOR CHILDREN, all attendees received a tourniquet and an Emergency Guidelines for Schools booklet in their registration bag, which was graciously stuffed by the wonderful students of The Pathfinder School in Bethel Park.

The school nurses of PASNAP certainly did rock during conference weekend, and I could not be more proud to be a school nurse!
An “Unsung Hero” Is Honored

Written by Denise Liberto, RN, MSN, CSN

Bucks County Technical High School, Fairless Hills, PA

One of our outstanding colleagues is being recognized as an “Unsung Hero” by PSEA’s Mideastern Region (MER) and the Council for the Advancement of Public Schools (CAPS). Mrs. Katie Engelhardt, a certified school nurse at Bucks County Technical High School (BCTHS), has been honored with the “Unsung Hero” award.

In celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week in May, PSEA’s MER and CAPS want to spotlight the amazing things happening in our public schools thanks to the professionals who work there. “Unsung Heroes” is the theme for the spring media campaign. Four non-teaching individuals working in schools in the roles of nurse, counselor, school psychologist, and social worker were selected from a number of nominees across PSEA mid-eastern region.

Each of the four professionals will be featured, one per week, from mid-April to mid-May.

Video footage will be the basis of the campaign and will be used in a variety of ways over the course of the month. The public will be asked to vote for their favorite “Unsung Hero”. All four individuals will receive a prize in addition to the recognition involved in seeing their stories on Facebook, in various websites, and through public relations efforts. The final “Unsung Hero” will be awarded a grant to be used for the Hero’s unfunded projects or department’s use.

According to her supervisor, Mr. Kevin Gentilcore, “Katie is an extraordinary professional who has had an extremely positive impact on BCTHS’s school culture and climate.” Some of Katie’s work includes proposing a new field trip form, the implementation of a “Comfort Closet” where daily hygiene products are offered to students and families in need and working as a cohesive team with the other nurse to foster a warm, open and welcoming environment to promote wellness and student success.

Katie’s video will be aired the week of April 30th, and can be accessed at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/caps1995. For more information, please check PSEA’s MER website at www.psea.org/mer and other media outlets for further information about this campaign. Please VOTE to see our colleague and friend, Katie Engelhardt, School Nurse, be the final “Unsung Hero”!

MENTOR

By Valerie Zanotti Med, BSN, RN, CSN

Mentor: an experienced and trusted advisor. This is the definition listed if you “google” mentor. However, a good mentor must also be someone who shows enthusiasm and passion for their job. I have had many mentors throughout my nursing career, some good and some not so good. Many years ago, newly married and having moved an hour away from the hospital that I had worked in upon graduating, I had quit that hospital to work at one closer to my new home. I fondly remember my mentor frantically saying, “Oh my gosh, I can’t believe they gave us that assignment!” Needless to say, I was feeling more frantic than she was. I also decided to quit and return to the first hospital, even though it was an hour away! I have also had many good mentors who have shown me the ropes, given me advice and confidence, and helped to instill a passion in the work that I do. Throughout my years as a nurse, I have been a mentor to other nurses, both in the hospital setting as well as the school setting. I have always enjoyed sharing my knowledge and experiences with others as they are introduced to nursing in general and school nursing specifically. I have tried to share not only the routine of a typical day and the policies and procedures of the job, but also the experiences that have helped to shape what I do. I hope that my enthusiasm for my profession has shone through as

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Each year, the PASNAP Board of Directors recognizes a certified school nurse from each region for excellence in the area of school nurse practice. The recipients were celebrated at the annual PASNAP education conference during the awards banquet on March 30 in State College. Glowing recommendations from colleagues and administrators preceded these Certified School Nurses’ arrival at the podium, as they accepted awards recognizing outstanding contributions to their schools, districts and communities. Regional award recipients are nominated by their peers in the region in which they work. As nominated by you, your regional School Nurse Excellence Award winners for 2019 are:

North East Region- Lynn Heard, South East Region- Robin Fox, North Central Region
Valerie Fulton, South Central Region
- Kathy Bagian, North West Region-
Michelle Bamat, South West Region
Angela Dastolfo, and Philadelphia Region- Que” Travis.
The Friends of School Nursing Award in given in recognition of a person or group that has helped to promote school nursing with advocacy or resources. This year’s award winner is Katherine Dahlsgaard, PhD ABPP. Dr. Dahlsgaard is Clinical Director of the Anxiety Behaviors Clinic at CHOP. She specializes in the evaluation and treatment of children, adolescents and young adults with anxiety disorders, particularly selective mutism, social anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, panic disorders, and generalized fears. Dr. Dahlsgaard has frequently presented at PASNAP educational conferences. She is an advocate for the children of PA and school nurses alike.

Cheryl Mattern M.Ed., BSN, RN, CSN is PASNAP’s nomination to NASN for Pennsylvania School Nurse of the Year. Cheryl, the 2018 South Central School Nurse Excellence regional award winner was selected from the pool of 2018 regional awardees. She will be honored at the NASN 2019 Conference in Denver, Colorado in June.

PASNAP’s Nominations to NASN PA SNOY
Cheryl Mattern MEd, BSN, RN CSN

by Kathy Verbel, M.Ed., BSN, RN, NCSN
I approach the red brick building,
Wondering what I will see
When I walk into the office
Who will be greeting me?

Today it’s a parent
Medicine the mom does hold
You see it’s for little Joey
He has a very bad cold.

Holding his tiny belly
Tommy’s coming up the hall
I ask why he came to school
He said “mom wanted to go to the mall.”

Sally comes from recess
With a cut on her arm
I just applied a bandaid
There’s no reason for alarm

Following right behind
Is Nancy holding her knee
She has tears in her big brown eyes
Because she was bit by a bee.

Lunch is fast approaching
Daily meds are ready to dispense
The kids must take their Ritalin
Or they’ll have to stand at the fence.

I sit down to do paperwork
When suddenly I feel a tug
It’s just little Larry

He only needs a hug.
Jimmy comes to my office
He has a big black eye
I ask him what had happened
His mom’s boyfriend was the guy.

Jenny comes in running
Her face is bright beet red
She is overheated
And wants to lie on a bed.
Mrs. Smith sends up Lillie
Timid as can be
I finally figure it out
She must have had to pee.

In comes Tim with a can
I know just what is wrong
He threw up in music class
As he sang a patriotic song.

The end of a busy day
Is quickly drawing near
I’ll go home, prop up my feet
And pop a nice cold root beer!

At bedtime I will thank God
For keeping us in his care
And, tomorrow I will return to school
I wonder what I will find there.

By Bonnie Shetter, author
middle school students liked the most recent version of the “Always Changing” videos by Proctor and Gamble. It is free on You-Tube and is only about 14 minutes long, which my girls loved because it gave them the information they needed in an upbeat and modern way, but still allowed us time for their favorite part of my 40 minute presentation, the Q and A/ Stump the Nurse portion. For those who have more time and or multiple times videos by Marsh Media got excellent reviews and the information seemed very through and student and adult friendly. Hard copies of the DVDs were available along with the ability to “rent” the on-line versions. Lastly, I found our own NASN, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the CDC websites very helpful. These sites have always been my go to for finding information and or resources for my health office educational needs. I hope this has been helpful for you, especially those who are new to our specialty. I hope that you have a fruitful and great last part of the 2018-2019 school year.

Children spend most of their waking hours in school. In Norristown Area School District, when they get sick at school, the school nurse can decide if a telehealth visit is needed. Sore throats, ear pain and rashes are illnesses that may warrant a telehealth visit with a Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia pediatrician. The pediatrician is ‘on-call’ for telehealth visits via sophisticated equipment and video conferencing similar to FaceTime, but more secure. Telehealth visits can reduce missed school days, provide early care and treatment.

After permission is obtained at the start of the school year, a student can participate in the pilot program. A parent is called before the telehealth visit starts and may be present on the phone during the video visit with the pediatrician. The parent does not miss time at work and if indicated, a prescription is sent electronically to the family’s choice of pharmacy. In some cases, the student can remain in school after receiving ibuprofen or medication for a rash. There is no charge for the visit, regardless of insurance status. A visit summary letter is sent to the student’s primary care provider.

The pilot program began in 2018 with funding from the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. Three schools, our high school, a middle school and an elementary school were part of the program. This school year, all twelve schools have telehealth equipment that allows school nurses to offer free telehealth visits with a CHOP pediatrician. Norristown Area school nurses have had telemedicine visits this school year that have been a learning experience for all involved. Bonnie Offit, MD is a pediatrician at CHOP and clinical advisor in CHOP’s department of Digital Health. The Norristown Area school nurses appreciate the relationship that has developed with Dr. Offit and the entire digital health team. Telehealth is here and the application at school promises to be very beneficial.

Link to original article:
https://www.chop.edu/news/technology-brings-doctor-school
A reoccurring theme frequently echoed among school nurses is the lack of school nurses substitutes. There are many reasons why school districts do not have an adequate substitute nurse pool. Some of these reasons may include the nursing shortage nationwide, lack of competitive nurse pay, and a lack of knowledge among nurses believing they are not permitted to sub.

For years, it has been predicted that there would be a nationwide shortage of nurses. As the baby boomer generation of nurses retire, they require health care. Furthermore, there are limited number of faculty available to teach future nurses which limits enrollment. Keeping nurses in the profession is another issue (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493175).

A lack of competitive pay for school nurse substitutes may be the largest roadblock to obtaining substitutes. In PA, a Certified School Nurse (CSN) fall under the teacher’s contract, which often includes the daily substitute rates for teachers. The daily rate may range from $75-150/per day. While students out of college fill the substitute list for teachers, new nursing graduates do not fill the substitute list for school nurses. Most school nurse substitutes are nurses who have many years of experience. Working in a school district for $12.00-21.00 per hour is well below the starting wage of a new graduate nurse. This rate is not competitive enough to entice nurses to be a substitute in the schools.

School administrators do not have a healthcare background and do not understand the value of school nurses. They believe the low hourly wage is the price a nurse pays for working normal day hours. They do not have the health care knowledge to understand the challenges the school nurse faces when managing the health office. Every day, the school nurse manage students with chronic health conditions, mental illness, and students from difficult home environments whereby their basic needs are often unmet. The health offices of today are not the health offices of 54 years ago where the ratio of 1:1500 was reasonable.

Lack of substitutes was a common re-occurring theme in my district for many years. While 50 years ago no nurse in the building could be managed, today there are many students with chronic health conditions. Several years ago, my district could not obtain school nurse substitutes. During that time, the HR director of the district had experience in health care. She was an advocate for the nurses and suggested that a competitive wage needed to be offered. After several meetings with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Superintendent, and HR Director, the substitute wage for nurses was increased from $10.25/hour to $17.00/hour. Advertisements listing the position and hourly wage were placed. After two weeks, there were no applicants. The hourly wage was increased to $20.00/hour for LPNs and $32.00/hour for RNs. The positions were re-advertised and the applications starting coming in. The rate change occurred 10 years ago and this district has not had an issue with obtaining substitutes. There is a waiting list of individuals who would like to sub. While the rate has not changed in ten years it is still a competitive rate. The school board approved the separate hourly wage for the nurse substitutes.

Our district has a variety of nurses who sub. Some of the nurses work 12 hour shifts at the local hospital, some are part-time, mothers with young children, and retired nurses (who must be called last due to PSERS rules). Each nurse is encouraged to obtain their own sub in advance of their absence. They can use the electronic substitute system if they are not able to schedule in advance.

Many nurses outside the educational environment believe they are not eligible to substitute because they are not a certified school nurse. While a non-certified nurse may not substitute as a school nurse, they may substitute as supplemental staff. In this role, they may administer medication and attend to the injury and illness needs of the students. Another CSN must accept responsibility for that case load and be available to provide assistance to the substitute. In districts that have only one CSN, the CSN would need to be available to the non-certified substitute (2019 School Health Update).

The daily substitute rate for all school personnel is not a one size fits all. Competitive rates for nursing (not the rates for school districts) must be offered. Some dis-
Districts have contracted with nursing agencies to provide nursing services and pay exorbitant contract rates. Why not pay a substitute a competitive wage that is less than the contracted rate with a nursing agency?

A school board can approve a different rate for substitute school nurses. There may need to be MOUs completed with the union. With the medical needs of the student in school today, many health offices cannot go without having a nurse present.

Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners

@PASNAP

Coming Soon!

If you enjoyed the Emotional Intelligence Session and would like to continue the conversation please join us on Facebook at:

E I of the CSN kind
Do you have a story, anecdote or ‘aha moment you are willing to share with your peers?

-a heart warming narrative
-a student comment that made you grin from ear to ear
-a wonderful resource in the community, on the web, or for your smartphone
-a new way of doing something (or an old way that still works great!)
-an award or accomplishment that made you proud

Send to NurseCallas@gmail.com “attention Pulse newsletter “

Meet Your New SE Rep

South East co-representative Holly Verderame is currently completing her Masters in Nursing Leadership with a concentration in school health through Eastern Mennonite University. Her capstone project focuses on children who frequent the nurses office with somatic complaints or have excessive absences and if these events are related to symptoms of anxiety. Holly intends to use a screening tool to assess for worry and symptoms of anxiety and provide the students with interventions to see if it leads to improved class attendance. If anyone has any interventions they’ve used with students who meet this criteria please feel free to contact Holly at hverderame@agcharter.org.

Stay in touch

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