RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SCHOOL NURSE ADVISORY COUNCIL

JANUARY 2020

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Background and Purpose of the Report

Section one of Public Act No. 13-187, An Act Concerning a School Nurse Advisory Council and An Advisory Council on Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorder Associated with Streptococcal Infections, effective July 1, 2013 established the School Nurse Advisory Council. The Council makes recommendations to the Commissioners of Public Health and Education and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly on matters related to education and public health including (1) professional development for school nurses; (2) school nurse staffing levels; (3) the delivery of health care services by school nurses in schools and other matters that affect school nurses; (4) protocols for Emergency Medication Administration; and (5) protocols for evaluating certain temporary medical conditions that may be symptomatic of serious illnesses or injuries.

The Council is in its sixth year and meets four times per year. Annual reports are submitted to Co-Chairs of Education and Public Health and Commissioners of State Department of Education and Public Health.

Schools in Connecticut are under local control, resulting in school health services, school nurse professional development, staffing levels and health services that vary from district to district. Members of the School Nurse Advisory Council give careful deliberation to the needs of districts in Connecticut and to state and national regulations, guidelines and best practices.

Recommendations are put forward by:
- American Federation of Teachers, Connecticut, AFL-CIO
- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
- Association of School Nurses of Connecticut (ASNC)
- Connecticut Association for Health Care at Home
- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)
- Connecticut Nurses Association (CNA)
- Connecticut Federation of School Administrators
- Connecticut Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- 1199

Recommendations

I. Professional Development and Qualifications for School Nurses

Professional Development:
Professionals in all fields must participate in professional development to remain current. Changes in professional development for other professional staff in school requires district level professional development offerings. There are a variety of ways for districts to offer
school nurses professional development without cost such as nurse driven professional development activities, networking opportunities, and online educational opportunities. With such alternatives in mind, professional development for school nurses should be given serious consideration and approval.

As the next century is now a reality, it is imperative for school nurses to access quality professional development in order to remain current with evolving health and educational standards. CGS10-212-a Qualifications for School Nurses, dated 1982, require school nurses to participate in a minimum of 10 hours of professional development every two years. Proposed recommendation for professional development:

**increase continuing education from 10 hours every two years to 15 hours every two years commencing July 1, 2021.**

**Qualifications:**
- Review of Regulations for School Nurses, 1982 is necessary prior to finalization of requirements for school nurses commencing 2021.
- School nurses must comply with National Standards of School Nurse Practice and with the Scope and Standards of School Nursing Practice. School nurses must have knowledge of Special Education and 504 in order to participate and comply with associated laws.

Children in Connecticut schools deserve highly qualified school nurses managing their health care needs. Over 50% of school nurses currently hold a Bachelor degree; others hold a Master degree or higher.

Diverse changes in the student population, more students with complex health care needs and the increasing responsibilities for school nurses in the provision of school health services in the educational environment require professional, highly qualified nurses prepared to contribute to the health and academic success of all children. Knowledge related to special education and 504 safeguards students and districts. Advanced education is a critical contributor toward meeting the goals of Connecticut schools. All professionals are required to meet discipline competencies and standards.

**Link to Competencies and Standards for School Nurse:**

**Link to School Nurse Qualifications:**

38 years have passed since any revisions to the 1982 regulations for school nurses have been made. See Appendix A for School Nursing in Connecticut- A Historical Perspective

It is, and has been, the recommendation of this Council to see the 1982 regulations change to meet the needs of 2020. School social workers are licensed by the Department of Public

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Health as well as certified by the State Department of Education. It is time for school nurses to be afforded the same opportunities as their professional colleagues. The committee requests a thorough review of CGS 10-212.

Following a review:

**Potential revisions may include entry level requirement for school nurses:**

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing or a related field.
- Nurses entering without a Bachelor degree will have 5 years to gain the degree.

**NOTE:** Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents does not support a change in qualifications.

Connecticut Board of Education supports a review and revision of 1982 regulations.

II. School Nurse Staffing

Recommendations pending dependent on input from all stakeholders

III. The Delivery of Health Care Services by School Nurses in Schools and Other Matters that Affect School Nurses

**Elimination of Religious Exemption for Vaccines.**

School-level data released for 2018-19 indicates that the number of immunized children has decreased and the number of exemptions has increased. The school-level data for the 2018-19 school year shows that 134 schools in CT have vaccination rates for measles, mumps and rubella below federal guidelines. Nationally and in Connecticut increasing numbers of preventable diseases have been reported. Reduction in herd immunity due to decreasing vaccine rates is a concern.

Organizations including the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Connecticut Medical Society support vaccines to protect individuals and the public.

List below identifies the opinion of SNAC organizations regarding religious exemptions:

- Association of School Nurses of Connecticut- supports elimination of religious exemption.
- Connecticut Nurses Association- studying the issue of elimination of religious exemption.
- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education- supports elimination of religious exemption.
- Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents- supports elimination of religious exemption.
- Connecticut Federation of School Administrators- no opinion at this time.
- Connecticut Association for Health Care at Home- supports elimination of religious exemption.
- American Federation of Teachers, Connecticut- supports elimination of religious exemption.
- 1199- no opinion at this time.
IV. Protocols for Emergency Medication Administration

Recent legislation is placing more and more responsibility for emergency medication administration on unlicensed school personnel. The School Nurse Advisory Council supports the requirement for staff who agree to administer emergency medication to do so voluntarily. **Unlicensed school staff shall not be required to administer emergency medication involuntarily.**

**Conclusion**

Recognition to members of the Council and those who will review this document for their dedication and efforts on behalf of school health and the health of Connecticut’s children. The Council considers the time needed to implement the recommendations in this document and, therefore, recognizes that July 2021 offers districts and other stakeholders the opportunity to prepare for anticipated changes.

The Council summarizes recommendations below:

**Section I Professional Development for School Nurses**

a. **Review and revise regulations written in 1982, CGS 10-212.**
   Recommendations may include:
   i. **entry level requirement for school nurses - Bachelor of Science in Nursing or a related field.**
   ii. **Nurses entering without a Bachelor degree will have 5 years to gain the degree.**

b. **increase continuing education from 10 hours every two years to 15 hours every two years commencing July 1, 2021.**

**NOTE:**

All members of the Council support increase in Professional Development Section I b. Professional Development.

**Section II** No recommendations at this time.

**Section III**

a. **eliminate Religious Exemption for vaccines – refer to individual opinions in Section III.**

For submission to:
Co-Chairs of Education and Public Health Committee
Commissioners of Education and Public Health
Respectfully submitted by,

**Donna Kosiorowski MS RN NCSN**

**Verna Bernard Jones MSN**

Co-chairs School Nurse Advisory Council

**NOTE:**

*Defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), the term 'specialized instructional support personnel' means: "(i) school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists; and "(ii) other qualified professional personnel, such as school nurses, speech language pathologists, and school librarians, involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services (including related services as that term is defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401) as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs."*
Appendix A

School Nursing in Connecticut
A Historical Perspective

- **1982**
  - School Nursing Regulations adopted.

- **1986**
  - Educational Enhancement Act-Nurses not included

- **89-90** Task Force

- **1993**
  - **Excerpt from State Department of Education Publication—**
    - *Evaluating Pupil Services—*
      - “The process of requiring certification for these school nurses has been initiated.”

- **1996**
  - Department of Education recommends certification for school nurses.

- **1997**
  - Bill for certification dies.

- **1997**
  - Excerpt from Connecticut Advisory School Health Council
    - *Standards for Pupil Services in Connecticut*
      - School Guidance and Counseling*
      - School Language, Speech, and Hearing*
      - School Social Worker*
      - School Psychology*
      - School Nursing

  *All but nursing have certification from State Department of Education.*

- **1998-**
  - State Department of Education ends quest for school nurse certification.
  - Recommends “changes to statute”.

- **1999-**
  - January Session of General Assembly:
    - Raised Bill No. 1295
    - *An Act Concerning Qualified School Nurses*
      - (Renamed *Act Concerning Quality School Health Services*).
      - Did not pass out of Public Health Committee.

- **1999-**
  - Starting over again…
    - Study Group- Departments of Public Health and Education, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), Association of School Nurses of Connecticut (ASNC), Connecticut Nurses’ Association (CNA), Legislators from Public Health and Education Committees (facilitated by Senator Toni Harp).

- **1999-2003-**
  - Negotiations for regulatory changes only.

- **May 2003-**
  - Regulatory language passes CABE 4-3 vote.
    - New regulations to go to public hearing.

- **Summer 2003-**
  - Office of Policy Management ends process for regulatory changes.
• 2003 to present-
  ▪ State Department of Education and ASNC continue to promote changes.

• April 2004-
  ▪ Meeting: ASNC, CNA, legislators.
  ▪ Recommendations: Meeting to be held after election 2004-no meeting

• May 2004-
  ▪ Meeting with The Office of the Child Advocate, SDE, school nurse representative, CAPSS.
  ▪ Recommendations: develop standards for school nurses.

▪ Competencies for School Nurses
  ▪ Competencies for School Nurses report to Task Force 10/08.
  ▪ What state policy changes need to be made to support standards and quality school health services?

• 2008 Task Force.
  ▪ Revisit regulatory changes and certification

• May 2004 to present-
  ▪ School nurses continue to pursue regulatory changes.

• February 2008
  • Raised Bill #5667
    An Act Concerning the Establishment of A Task Force to Study the Evolving Role of the School Nurse
  • Session runs out of time………………

November 2008
• - Unofficial Task Force formed- Peggy Sayers, Chair

Legislative session 2010
HB 6687, "AAC Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes"
School nurses agree to pull bill based on additional language insertion.

February 23, 2011
Public Hearing on
Raised S.B. No. 929 AN ACT CONCERNING THE QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS OF SCHOOL NURSES.

March 2013

Testimony RB 1070: AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL NURSE STAFFING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCHOOL NURSE ADVISORY COUNCIL.

August 2013

School Nurse Advisory Council (SNAC) begins meeting

February 1 2014 to present

SNAC Recommendations to Legislature submitted yearly.