

School Health Update

AUGUST 2023



DIVISION OF SCHOOL HEALTH

Director - Division of School Health

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Please begin contacting the School Health Nurse Consultant in your region. Contact information below:

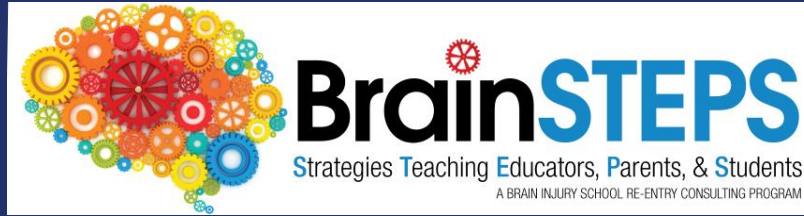
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As a reminder, if there have been any changes regarding new nursing staff, nurse retirements, etc. please notify your school nurse consultant of the changes so we may keep our distribution lists up to date.



Bureau of Family Health – BrainSTEPS



In the coming weeks, the Department of Health will be sending every school nurse a BrainSTEPS program poster. This poster offers a comprehensive overview of the program, detailing the array of services and supports it provides to help students with a brain injury achieve academic success. It also includes a convenient QR code that will take you directly to the referral form, streamlining the process of referring students who may benefit from the BrainSTEPS program. This quick and easy access will ensure that students receive the necessary support as soon as possible. Once you receive the poster, it is encouraged to display it prominently in your office. It will not only serve as a valuable resource for you but also help raise awareness about the program among students, teachers, and parents. Additional information about the BrainSTEPS program can be found here:

[BrainSTEPS – Strategies Teaching Educators, Parents, & Students](#)

Communicable Disease Questions



Please contact your local county, state or city health department.

Please see the below website for contact information for your county/municipality.

<https://www.health.pa.gov/About/Pages/State%20Health%20Centers.aspx>

Medical Marijuana Questions

Please contact 717-547-3047 or

RA-DHMedMarijuana@pa.gov

The Division of School Health has no regulatory authority over the use of marijuana products in schools. We may only refer you to the medical marijuana program and its website. <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/programs/Medical%20Marijuana/Pages/School.aspx>

School Health Website Updates

- A-Z Topics reviewed to ensure information is current.
- Diabetes Training revised to provide updated links to the American Diabetes Association website.
- Narration is now available on all Diabetes Training modules (Levels 1-3).

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/school/Pages/Diabetes.aspx>

IMMUNIZATION QUESTIONS



Please contact the Division of Immunizations at 717-787-5681.

School immunization information may be located at: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/programs/immunizations/Pages/School.aspx>

Coronavirus Information 23-24 School Year



COVID-19 is no longer a reportable condition in PA since the public health emergency ended on May 11th. However, please note from [PA HAN 700](#):

“COVID-19 remains a reportable condition in the following counties with local health departments established under the Local Health Administration Law of 1951: Philadelphia, Montgomery, and Allegheny “ Schools that are within local county or city health department jurisdiction should continue to follow local reporting guidelines and procedures.

Individual cases of influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), or COVID-19 do not need to be reported by the school/childcare center. However, regulations do require reporting of outbreaks for any condition.

Facilities will now report all outbreaks through the typical 1-877-PA HEALTH route rather than using the COVID RA accounts.

Additional information for schools may be found at the following link: [Respiratory Guidance for Schools and Childcare Facilities](#)

A reminder that the K-12 COVID-19 testing program ended on July 31st, 2023.

Additional resources for COVID-19 Testing in Pennsylvania may be found at the following link: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Symptoms-Testing.aspx>



From the National Association of State School Nurse Consultants

NASSNC Releases Action Agendas Calling for School Nurses to Declare Their Nursing Professionalism Across America

The National Association of State School Nurse Consultants (NASSNC) is challenging school nurses to declare they are Registered Nurses.

Today, the [National Association of State School Nurse Consultants \(NASSNC\)](#) released two [action agendas](#): #1 Declare You are a Registered Nurse and #2 Explain School Nursing to School Administrators. School nurses should claim their professional preparation as Registered Nurses (RN). Using the RN credential documents their expertise and asserts their legal authority to practice professional nursing. School nurses should speak with one voice, universally and consistently using RN in all communication with school staff, parents, and the public. School administrators need to have a better understanding of the breadth and depth of the school nurses' knowledge and competence. The action agendas provide school nurses with strategies to accomplish both.

The public recognizes and respects the credential of Registered Nurse and understands they are vital healthcare providers. The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted a range of RN roles from life-savers in hospital critical care to prevention specialists via community mass immunization clinics. As the sole healthcare provider in schools, school nurses provide direct health care services for students with increasingly complex physical and mental health issues as well as being public health champions for the school community.

School nurses are advocates, problem solvers, educators, negotiators, and navigators. NASSNC is calling for increased:

- Awareness that school nursing is anchored in preparation as an RN.
- Recognition of school nurses as experts at the intersection of health and learning.
- Use of school nurses' wide range of knowledge and skills to address health-related barriers to learning of individual students and to anticipate population health needs of the school community.

The NASSNC statements can be accessed [here](#).

Louise Wilson, NASSNC President, said today:

“Keeping students in school and ready to learn is an important shared goal of parents and school staff. The National Association of State School Nurse Consultants seeks to raise the awareness of everyone who is invested in children and youth - parents, school staff and, public health partners, healthcare providers, and local and state leaders – of school nurses' expertise and their significant contributions to the health and educational success of students. School nurses address student health concerns so teachers can teach and students can learn.”



Information and Resources from the American Lung Association

Vaping among Youth is a Public Health Concern. Nicotine significantly affects both Physical and Mental health of Youth. According to the **2022 National Youth Survey**, **more than 2.5 Million Youth Vape/** use E-cigarettes. **30% of High School Students Vape Daily** and 86% use flavored Vapes. **380,000 Middle School Students Vape**, 11.7% Vape Daily, and 82% use flavored Vapes.

With Youth spending about 7 hours per day in school, we have the unique opportunity to work together to improve the Lung Health of youth in Pennsylvania.

We need your help and we are here to support you with the following evidenced-based programs:

Tobacco Youth Prevention Programing and Resources

- **ACT to Address Youth Cessation Training** is a FREE one-hour on-demand, online course that provides an overview for healthcare professionals, school personnel and community members in youth/adolescent supportive roles in conducting a brief intervention for teens who use tobacco. **Based on the American Academy of Pediatrics' Youth Tobacco Cessation: Considerations for Clinicians**, the session outlines the steps of Ask, Counsel, Treat, and provides guidance, support, and best practices for effectively delivering ACT as a brief intervention for adolescents who identify as tobacco users, including e-cigarettes.
- **Alternative to Suspension or Citation Program: Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health (INDEPTH): INDEPTH™** is a convenient alternative to suspension or citation that helps schools and communities address the teen vaping problem in a more supportive way. Instead of solely focusing on punitive measures. **REGISTER** for our **FREE** online training today!
- **Not On Tobacco Youth Cessation Program- the Perfect Complement to INDEPTH**, schools seeking to implement teen tobacco cessation programs can sign up for our **Not On Tobacco (N-O-T)** program. **Not On Tobacco (N-O-T)** is a voluntary teen-centered cessation program inclusive in addressing all tobacco product use, including e-cigarettes. Learn more about American Lung Association's Youth Cessation Program Facilitator Training at [Lung.org/not](https://www.lung.org/not).
 - **NOT for Me** is available at no charge at www.NOTforMe.org. The online resource will not replace the facilitator-led N-O-T group program (virtual or in-person) but can be used by teens who may not have access to a local program or facilitator or for those who feel uncomfortable participating in group sessions.
- **TRU in PA | Tobacco Resistance Unit** is a movement throughout all of Pennsylvania to help youth, ages 12 to 18, stay tobacco-free. All former TRU members who remain committed to creating a tobacco-free future for Pennsylvania, as well as all young adult advocates ages 18-21 years old, are invited to join **TRU Plus!**
- **Conversation Guide for Parents:** continue to raise awareness about the dangers of e-cigarettes through [Talk About Vaping](#) – an awareness campaign encouraging parents to talk to their kids about vaping before it's too late.
- **Additional Free Downloadable Resources:**
 - Check out our Regional [Tobacco-Free Coalition](#) page for additional resources
 - The TRU digital toolkit is available now from TRU website: [TRUinPA.org/notforme-referral-kit](https://www.TRUinPA.org/notforme-referral-kit).
 - One-pagers available in English and Spanish at [Lung.org/ecigs](https://www.lung.org/ecigs)
 - Additional On-Demand Trainings and Courses can be found at [Lung.Training](https://www.lung.org/training)

From the Division of Environmental Health Epidemiology



Air Quality Training

The Environmental Health Capacity (EHC) Program is pleased to invite you to participate in a short nano learning course on air quality: https://youtu.be/mIY_Z5iAYDk. The EHC program is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded program under the Division of Environmental Health Epidemiology (DEHE) with the Pennsylvania Department of Health. EHC seeks to provide outreach and education on topics related to children's environmental health.

Children's environments, such as where they live, learn and play, may impact their health. Exposure to environmental hazards like mold, poor air quality or contaminated drinking water could lead to harmful health outcomes. Notably, infants and children have a higher risk of experiencing harm from exposure to environmental hazards. One environmental indicator that is of great importance to children's development is air quality. Air is an essential part of our lives. Children, whose lungs are still developing, have a higher risk of developing complications such as asthma due to poor air quality. Teaching these kids – our future leaders – about air quality is one of the first steps in creating environmental and public health change. The nano learning course should take a few minutes to complete and provides an overview of what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Air Quality Index (AQI) is, why it is important, and how it can be included in classroom plans and activities. The content included in the nano training was retrieved from the [AirNow.gov](https://www.airnow.gov) website and additional electronic resources are provided for you to use as needed.

Survey Request

School nurses are integral in the frontline response to environmental hazards that may impact students' health and safety. The Pennsylvania Department of Health's Division of Environmental Health Epidemiology would like to hear from you!

In this anonymous and confidential [survey](#), we are seeking to identify and understand what environmental hazards you may encounter in your daily practice and which topics you would be interested in receiving additional information on. We appreciate your time and participation! If the embedded link does not work, please copy and paste the following link into your web browser: <https://forms.office.com/g/twgS4Sc43Q>

***If you have comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the EHC Program at dehe@pa.gov.