

*“School nurses are absolutely essential to the health and well-being of our students and staff. They are often the first person a student or a parent contacts when they have an illness, a family tragedy, or many other issues. I cannot imagine any school in Alaska not having a licensed school nurse on the staff.”*

— Carol Comeau, Superintendent  
Anchorage School District



Studies have proven that students in schools that have a school nurse perform better academically.

An average of 4–5 children in every classroom of 25 have a chronic health condition that impacts their ability to learn such, as:

- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Seizure disorder
- Food allergy

School nurses decrease absenteeism by providing needed health services. They assess student health and safety, and intervene as needed so that students can:

- Come to school
- Stay in school
- Be ready to learn
- Be safe

According to a national survey of school nurses:

- 98% have saved a child’s life
- 82% have identified an abused child
- 67% have counseled a depressed/suicidal student

*“I love being a school nurse because I am sometimes the only health care these children have. I have an opportunity to teach and treat those that otherwise would go without. Each contact with a student is a teachable moment to help them improve their overall health and wellness.”*

— Krista Grilliot, RN, BSN, NCSN  
Mat-Su Day School  
Matanuska Susitna Borough School District

*“School nurses are essential personnel at EVERY school setting — on a full-time basis. He/she is an essential member of the school team to advocate, educate and care for our students. The school nurse is one of the key liaisons with the health care community for the improvement of circumstances for our students.”*

— Janie Henderson, MS, Educational Liaison  
The Children’s Hospital at Providence



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# Alaska School Nurses Make a Difference



Every child deserves  
a school nurse



## What does the school nurse do?

The professional school nurse helps build a healthy school community that promotes learning. School nurses support systematic health and safety in schools through the CDC's Coordinated School Health Program:

- Health Services — coordinates nursing services of students and staff by identifying and managing barriers to learning.
- Health Education — provides health education to students, staff and community members.
- Physical Education and Activity — supports programs and works with PE teachers to promote healthy physical activity and exercise, fitness and sports participation.
- Nutrition — educates about nutritious foods, helps manage student dietary needs, and promotes nutritious school meals.
- Healthy and Safe School Environment — identifies and intervenes in health and safety issues that may compromise a safe physical, emotional and social school environment.
- Family and Community Involvement — works with family and community partners to identify and provide programs to meet the health related needs of children and families.
- Health Promotion for Staff — promotes staff wellness by providing health information, monitoring chronic conditions, and supporting health activities.
- Counseling and Mental Health — promotes and develops helping relationships using assessment, intervention and referral.

*"Our goal is to have children in the classroom, healthy and ready to learn."*

— Maureen Hall, RN, BSN  
Mendenhall River Community School  
Juneau School District

*"As a parent and physician, I know that the school nurse is vital to the health of my kids and the community. It is important to have a school nurse who your children will go to and trust when they don't feel well. They are the pulse of the public health trends in the community, and they help keep everyone healthy."*

— Dr. Cate Buley, FAAFP  
Assistant Medical Director  
SEARHC Ethel Lund Medical Center  
Juneau, Alaska



## A Day in the Life of a School Nurse ... the many ways the school nurse helps children succeed in a day

- Open office, six students waiting.
- Parent requests nurse check ear for **infection**, referral to health care provider. Student with **fever/cough** sent home. Start care plan for newly enrolled student with **seizures**. Call to physician to clarify **medical orders**.
- Students seen for **medications, stomach aches** (school anxiety, no breakfast), **bicycle accident** over weekend (check wound), weekly check in with student coping with parent's **divorce**. Teach sixth grade **growth and development** class.
- Mid-morning blood glucose check for student with **diabetes**. Pre-recess survey of playground for **safety** due to ice. Teacher concerned about potential **child abuse** for one of his students, report made.
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting for student with **learning disability** and **hearing loss**. **Tube feeding** administered. Prepare for staff **CPR/First Aid class** later in week.
- **Insulin calculation** for student with diabetes. Lunchtime medications administered. Playground

injuries, student with **shoulder injury** referred for further evaluation. Assessed and discussed **staff member's** health concern.

- Lunch between students while staff watches over office. Complete **State Immunization Report**. Work with student on **hygiene issues**. Call parent to follow up financial assistance for **vision referral**.
- Student with **peanut allergy** brought to nurse from classroom celebration for **life-threatening breathing problems**. Epinephrine auto-injector given, 911 and parents called. Called to playground for student with **head injury**.
- Diabetes blood glucose check before bus call. Parent with questions regarding **TB skin test result**. School **Disaster Preparedness** meeting.
- Close office after computer input of day's documentation. Finalize plan for mass **screening of height/weight, vision and hearing**. Saw over 50 students today. Off to a coalition meeting to discuss health services for **homeless students**.