

# Making a Difference

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## School Nursing: Impacting Student Achievement Every Day



March 2011



# Times are Changing...

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- ❑ *Our society is changing* with emerging new technologies and globalization of our economy.
- ❑ *Our families are changing* and becoming smaller and more mobile in response to our changing economy.
- ❑ *Our students are changing* as more students with complex medical conditions and other health issues are included in daily instruction.
- ❑ *Our schools are changing* so that all students can gain the knowledge and skills they need to achieve success in school and life.



# Somewhere in an Alaska elementary school...

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- A kindergarten student missed 22 days of his first year in school due to uncontrolled asthma...
- A second grader, afraid to go to the playground, develops a stomach ache and misses classes...
- A new third grader is struggling to read and copy from the board. She falls behind and makes numerous errors in her work...
- A fourth grader strains to hear the teacher from her back-row seat...



# Somewhere in an Alaska middle school...

- A sixth grader with diabetes experiences a growth spurt and her insulin levels fluctuate. She can't concentrate in class...
- A student has dislocated a shoulder in a PE class...
- An eighth grader with special needs requires daily assistance with a feeding tube...



# Somewhere in an Alaska high school...

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- A ninth grade student is heard purging in the girl's bathroom. Her grades are failing...
- A football player experiments with over-the-counter medication to build muscle tone. He is inattentive in class...
- An eleventh grade honor student is stressed about her parents' divorce and is absent from school...
- A twelfth grader fractures a dominant hand in PE class a week before final exams...

# Somewhere in Alaska...

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## *Of high school students...*

- 9% have attempted suicide one or more times during the previous 12 months
- 12% are obese and at risk for life long health complications
- 33% have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days
- 44% have had sexual intercourse

-2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results



# Somewhere in Alaska...

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## *A school nurse is...*



- administering medications
- providing a gastrostomy tube feeding
- conducting a vision screening
- setting up a plan of care for a diabetic student
- providing emergency care on the playground
- training staff in CPR and first aid
- reporting a suspected child abuse situation

# Somewhere in Alaska...

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## *A school nurse is...*

- monitoring a pertussis outbreak
- attending an IEP meeting
- coordinating school health services for a new student
- checking and recording immunizations
- assuring confidentiality
- teaching a class on handwashing



# Somewhere in Alaska...

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## *A school nurse is...*

- monitoring school air quality
- consulting with a physician on a student with life-threatening allergies
- leading a staff wellness class
- referring a suicidal student for immediate mental health care
- coaxing a kindergarten student back to class
- attending a school wellness committee meeting



# It's No Wonder That...

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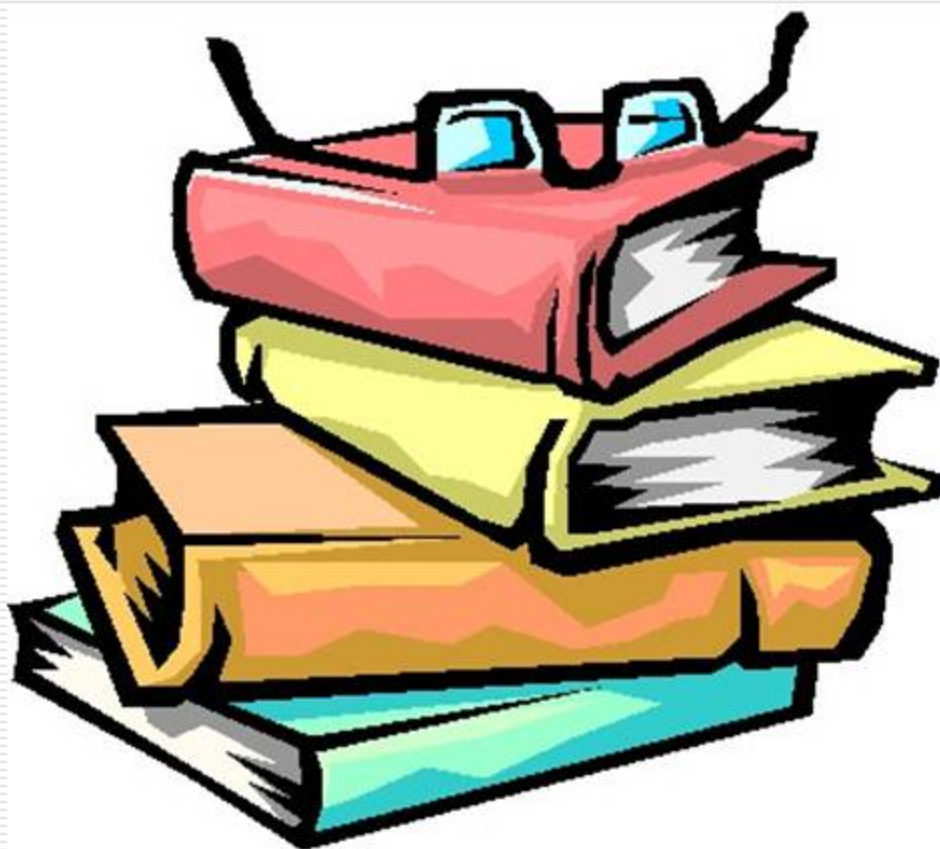
School nurses play a powerful role in educational achievement of students so that students can:

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



# Review of the Literature

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# Students with Complex Health Problems

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- ❑ 98% (52 million) of the nation's children spend their day in schools and **16%** of these students have chronic physical, emotional, or other health problems (*NCES, 2008*)
- ❑ In 2007 in Alaska, out of an estimated child population of 182,287, **16.5%** have special health care needs (*NSCH, 2007*)

# Complex health problems are on the rise

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- ❑ From 2002 to 2008, the percentage of children in special education with health impairments, due to chronic or acute health problems, **increased 60%** (*Bloom, 2009*)
  - ❑ Within this group, the rate of children with **autism** has doubled since 2002
- ❑ School days missed due to **asthma** has increased by 40% in the past 10 years (*Levy, 2006*)
- ❑ In the last 10 years, there has been a 50% increase in the incidence of **diabetes** in the general population (*CDC, 2009*)



# More children require health related services in schools

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- ❑ More children require nursing and other health-related services in school due to:
  - Social attitudes that promote inclusion
  - State and national laws that specify disability rights and access to education such as
    - Individuals with Disability Act (IDEA)
    - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

*(Palfrey et al., 1992; Raymond, 2009; Small et al., 1995).*



# School nurses are meeting more acute care needs

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- ❑ With reduced hospitalizations and/or reduced lengths of stay, school nurses are now often responsible for supervising the care of children who have illnesses such as acute asthma and diabetes, formerly managed in a hospital setting (*Chabra et al., 2000; Coffman et al., 2008; Leslie et al., 1998; Schutte et al., 1997*).

# School nurses impact school attendance

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- ❑ School nurses are significantly less likely to dismiss a student than an unlicensed counterpart (school secretary, etc.):
  - School nurses attended to 64% of a given school population (grades 1-12) and returned 95% to class as opposed to the non-licensed staff that saw 36% and returned 82% to class (*Pennington & Delaney, 2008*),
  - Students were 2 times as likely to leave school early on days that the school nurse was not in the building. (*Wyman, 2005*).



# School nurses impact school attendance

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- ❑ In Alaska, 56% of children age 6-17 years have missed 1-5 days of school for illness or injury in the past 12 months (*NSCH 2007*)
- ❑ Infectious diseases account for millions of school days lost for K-12<sup>th</sup> grade yearly in the U.S. (*CDC 2007*)
- ❑ School nurses have a positive impact on immunization rates with fewer parent requested exemptions (*Salmon, 2005*)



# The school nurse may be a child's first and/or only health care resource

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- ❑ The overall percentage of children without health insurance from 2001-2007 was **9.6%** (NCHS 2010)
- ❑ In the U.S., **1,594,000** individuals used an emergency shelter and/or transitional housing in 2007. 32% were homeless persons in families.
  - In 2008, Alaska ranked **10<sup>th</sup>** out of the 50 states with the highest concentrations of homeless people
  - Single-night homeless counts from 2007, 2008, 2009 in Alaska show a definite rise in the number of homeless. (*AK Justice Forum*)

# The school nurse may be a child's first and/or only health care resource

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- ❑ With more working parents, children who are sick with mild or chronic conditions are less likely to be monitored at home on school days and more likely to be sent to the school nurse for assessment and a determination as to whether they need to see a physician (*Smolensky and Gootman, 2003; Thurber et al., 1991; Uphold & Graham, 1993; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Wold, 2001*).



# School nurses affect academic achievement

- ❑ There is a strong association between health services provided by school nurses (such as prevention, direct health services, screening and referrals) and academic achievement

*(Vinciullo & Bradley, 2009)*



# What is School Nursing?

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*School nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success and life-long achievement and health of students.*

*To that end, school nurses:*

- facilitate positive student responses to normal development;
- promote health and safety, including a healthy environment;
- intervene with actual and potential health problems;
- provide case management services;
- actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self advocacy, and learning.

NASN, 2010



# Roles of a School Nurse

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*A school nurse is...*

- Direct Health Care Provider
- School Health Services Leader
- Identifier of Barriers to Learning
- Promoter of Healthy School Environment
- Promoter of Health
- Leader in Health Policies and Program Development
- Liaison (between school personnel, family, community and health care providers)



# Direct Health Care Provider

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- Care for injured or ill students and staff
- Treat and refer health problems, communicate with parents and health care providers
- Assess, plan, implement, and evaluate plan of care for students with chronic conditions including emergency plans
- Provide medication administration, health care procedures
- Assist staff with health conditions



# Health Services Leader

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- ❑ Connecting students and staff to available resources
- ❑ Overall plan of care for school including developing a plan for handling emergencies, disaster planning, and training of staff to respond appropriately
- ❑ Assure compliance with laws on delegation





# Identifier of Barriers to Learning

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- Vision
- Hearing
- Tuberculosis
- Growth assessments
- Oral health
- Emotional health
- Chronic diseases



# Promoter of Healthy School Environment

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- Immunizations, Tuberculosis
- Communicable diseases
- Bloodborne pathogens
- Health & safety – playgrounds, buildings, monitoring frequent injuries/illness
- Emotional health – bullying, violence, school anxiety and phobias, family stress, academic stress, suicide

# Promoter of Health

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- Health education – individual, group, and classroom
- Health fairs, newsletter, health topics presentations for students, staff and community
- Consultation on healthy lifestyles for students, staff, families, and community
- Staff wellness program development
- Collaboration with all coordinated school health teams

# Leader in Health Policies and Programs

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- ❑ **Leader of school health teams:**
  - coordinated school health program efforts
  - school wellness council
  - safety management/disaster planning teams
- ❑ **Promotes** health careers, mentors student nurses
- ❑ **Participates** in research and data collection
- ❑ **Develops** & updates school health policies and procedures



# Liaison *between* School Personnel, Family, Community *and* Health Care Providers

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- Participates** as the health expert on IEP, 504, and student assistance teams
- Communicates** with family through telephone calls, written communication and home visits as needed
- Serves** as a representative of the school community
- Communicates** with health care providers and agencies
- Develops** community partnerships
- Serves** on community coalitions



# National Standards for Staffing School Nursing

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NASN recommends a needs-based formula approach for determining full-time school nurse-to-students ratio. For example:

- 1:750 **well** students
- 1:225 in the student populations that may require daily professional school nursing services or interventions such as Special Ed inclusions
- 1:125 in student populations with complex health care needs
- 1:1 may be necessary for individual students with multiple disabilities



# National Standards for School Nursing Experience

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## NASN recommends:

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university
- School Nurse Certification through the National Board of Certification of School Nurses

## School Nurses need expertise in:

- Pediatric, public health and mental health nursing with strong health promotion, assessment, and referral skills
- Education and health laws impacting children
- Teaching strategies for the delivery of health education to students and staff



# School Nursing Overlaps Other Nursing Fields

- Ambulatory Care (surgery centers)
- Burn Care
- Developmental Disabilities**
- Emergency**
- Geriatrics
- Home Health and Hospice
- Intensive Care** (cardio, medical, neonatal, surgical)
- Medical Telemetry**
- Mother-Baby**
- Oncology**





# School Nursing Overlaps Other Nursing Fields

- Operating Room
- Orthopedics
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatric Nursing
- Public Health Nursing
- Recovery Room (post anesthesia)
- Rehabilitation
- Renal (diabetes and dialysis)
- Research
- School Nursing (of course!)



# School Nursing in Alaska



# School Nursing in Alaska

## Snapshot of School Nursing



- ❑ Based on current information, 15 out of 54 school districts in Alaska hire school nurses but only 6 of those districts have more than one school nurse.
- ❑ Out of the 131,662 public school students\* in the state, 103,430 are served by a school nurse. This represents 79% of the student population.

\* 97,943 of these students attend school in the larger, more urban districts



# School Nursing in Alaska



## Alaska Public School Districts



For a more detailed version

[http://www.eed.state.ak.us/Alaskan\\_Schools/](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/Alaskan_Schools/)



# School Nursing in Alaska

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## *Alaska Statutes*

School Health Services mandated by Alaska Law include:

### **Sec. 14.30.060 Physical examinations and screening examinations**

- Certificate of Physical Examination
- Immunization
- Vision and Hearing Screening Examinations

### **Sec. 18.15.120 Tuberculosis Control Program Authorized**



# School Nursing in Alaska

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## School Nursing Funding

- ❑ Most school nurses are school district employees
- ❑ Grants through community health centers are another source of funding for school nursing
- ❑ Districts have contracted with nurses to provide health services in schools
- ❑ Itinerant public health nurses and community health aides provide limited health services in some school districts mostly related to fulfilling state statutes

# School Nursing in Alaska

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## *School Nursing Preparation*

- ❑ Most school nurses are bachelor degree prepared registered nurses and many have masters degrees, national certification for school nursing and/or are advanced nurse practitioners
- ❑ In the ASD and Mat-Su School District, school nurses must hold a Type C Special Services Certificate with the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED).

# Professional Issues

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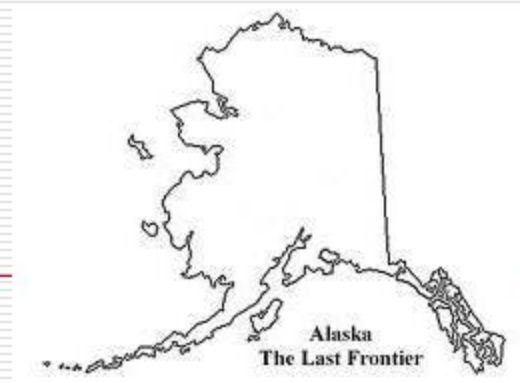


## *The Role of the School Nurse*

- ❑ Professional status varies greatly in Alaska:
  - From certified staff position to classified or support position
- ❑ Misperceptions of school nursing contributions to student achievement exist resulting in lack of inclusion as part of the educational team for building student success



# Professional Issues



## School Nursing Wages

<b>Average Wages for School Nurses (2010-2011)</b>	<b>Average Wages for AK Registered Nurses (2009)</b>
\$35.52 hourly	\$36.04 hourly
\$47,610 yearly	\$74,970 yearly

<b>School Nursing AVERAGE Wages – District Comparison</b>	
<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
\$28.63 hourly	\$48.01 hourly
\$33,234 yearly	\$62,059 yearly



# Professional Issues

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## *Statewide School Health Standards*

- ❑ School health standards vary from school to school, district to district, and across the nation
- ❑ Supervision and coordination of nursing services by non-nursing leaders may cause role confusion and practice concerns
- ❑ Performance evaluations are often provided by a non-nursing supervisor, likely the building administrator (principal), who utilizes competence standards based on education, not nursing



# Professional Issues

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## Professional Development

- ❑ Continuing professional development needed for school nurses involves fulfillment of numerous requirements and costs:
  - Continuing education for nursing license renewal every 2 years - 30 contact hours and \$175
  - Continuing education for national re-certification (optional but encouraged) every 5 years – 75 contact hours and \$225
  - Continuing education for Type C Certificate renewal every 5 years – 6 credits and \$125 (3 credits may be CEU conversion costing \$50 per credit to convert 15 CEUs)
- ❑ Lack of availability, lack of district funding, travel costs, and time away from work all contribute to difficulties fulfilling professional development needs

# Professional Issues

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## Technology

- Because extensive record-keeping functions are called for in the school setting, school nurses need to have appropriate technological tools to gather and analyze data in an efficient way and to keep accurate, up-to-date, and confidential records
- Several districts do not have electronic records systems (ERS) and those that do, often have ERS that are not designed for health services
- Numerous ERS and other data systems exist without interfacing of systems
- Training opportunities should be offered to school nurses when offered to other staff

# Professional Issues

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## *Communication and Collaboration*

- Communication and collaboration with other school nurses and health professionals in the community are imperative in order for school nurses to help students with complex medical conditions, physical, emotional and/or social needs that sometimes create barriers to educational success.
- School nurses are often isolated in their offices and positions, with limited capability and time to collaborate and communicate with others.

# Alaska School Health & Safety Plan

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- ❑ November 2008, Alaska Education Plan was developed with input from over 3000 Alaskans providing a roadmap for public K-12 education
- ❑ “Be Healthy” was an identified outcome for graduation
- ❑ As a result, in October 2010 the *Alaska School Health and Safety Plan\** was developed based on the CDC Coordinated School Health Program Model:
  - Health Education
  - Physical Education
  - Nutrition Services
  - Health Services
  - Family/Community Involvement
  - Health Promotion for Staff
  - Counseling and Mental Health
  - Healthy School Environment

\*plan is under review by the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



# Alaska School Health & Safety Plan

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## *Health Services Essential Steps*

- 1. Coordinate with the Department of Health & Social Service's State School Health Nurse Consultant and the statewide School Health and Nursing Services Advisory Group to promote development of evidence-based school health and nursing services standards and guidelines.**

### *Indicators of success/measures:*

- Evidence-based school health and nursing services standards and guidelines are developed and utilized



# Alaska School Health & Safety Plan

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## *Health Services Essential Steps*

- 2. Advocate for all school districts to have access to quality school nursing services, whether on-site or in consultation with a regional or community professional school nurse.**

### *Indicators of Success/Measures:*

- Increased number of school districts that provide school nursing services that meet nationally recommended ratios of nurses to students\*
- Increased number of school nurses that meet professional standards

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\**The National Association of School Nurses recommends a minimum ratio of nurses to students as 1:750 or less students per nurse depending on student populations with special needs.*





# Alaska School Health & Safety Plan

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## *Health Services Essential Steps*

- 3. Advocate for every student to have access to school-based or school-linked health services within the context of a Coordinated School Health Program Model to eliminate health disparities.**

### *Indicators of Success/Measures:*

- Increased coordination between the departments of Education & Early Development and Health & Social Services, school nurses, and others providing school health services to provide staff trainings, improve use of individualized health plans for students with chronic health care needs, improve compliance with state regulations, and improve health services and referral systems
- Increased number of formal agreements (such as memoranda of agreement) between school districts and state, local, or tribal health organizations to provide school health or nursing services
- Increased number of school based health centers



# Alaska School Health & Safety Plan

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## *Health Services Essential Steps*

- 4. Support the Department of Health & Social Services in creating a comprehensive and ongoing data and evaluation system identifying gaps in school health and nursing services, and encourage school district participation**

### *Indicators of Success/Measures:*

- Statewide collection system for data in place and used for planning, implementing, and evaluating school health services and nursing programs



# Alaska School Health & Safety Plan

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## *Health Services Essential Steps*

- 5. Support professional development for school nurses and others providing health services and responding to medical needs in schools**

### *Indicators of Success/Measures:*

- Increased number of professional development opportunities and continuing nursing education credits offered for school nurses and others providing health services
- Increased number of school staff in each school trained in emergency response including first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as well as safe administration of medications



# What Can You DO?

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- Promote and nurture the vision that healthy **students + healthy schools = educational success**
- Encourage school, family and community in strengthening strategies that remove barriers to learning
- Encourage development of school policies and procedures that support healthy students who are ready-to-learn

# What Can You DO?

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- Advocate for allocation of resources that best address the health and safety needs of students so they can learn
- Become part of a school and community team that encourages healthy students, healthy schools and academic success
- Promote strong educational leadership that supports school nurses, teachers, and all school staff in meeting the educational and health needs of students

# State of Alaska School Nursing/School Health Program

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## *Resource available for:*

- Clinical consultation, technical assistance, policy development and analysis, professional education in the areas of school nursing practice and school health
- Research and evaluation of best practices in the provision of school nursing and evaluation of the provision of school nursing services in schools across the state

## Contact :

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