



National Association of School Nurses

For Immediate Release

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MICHIGAN SCHOOL NURSE-TO-STUDENT RATIO: SECOND WORST IN NATION

A 2008 report from the National Association of School Nurses estimates that there is one school nurse for every 4,204 school children in Michigan.

Silver Spring, MD, May 14, 2008 – In a 2008 report released by the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), Michigan was listed second to last in the country with an alarming ratio estimated at one school nurse for every 4,204 students.

School nurses help to support the physical, mental, emotional and social health of students. Responsibilities of the school nurse include referrals for routine vision and hearing screenings, monitoring immunizations, providing health education to students and staff and addressing the daily needs of students with chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy. Proper daily management of chronic illness by the school nurse keeps children safe and healthy while reducing absenteeism, emergency room visits and hospitalization.

NASN recommends using a formula-based ratio of school nurse-to-students that considers the health and economic conditions of each district population. In a general population, a ratio of one school nurse to 750 students may be appropriate. However, in schools with a high population of students with chronic illnesses or developmental disabilities, a ratio of one school nurse to 125 students may be necessary. School nurse-to-student ratios need to be set to ensure that each student is afforded appropriate preventative, health promotion, early identification and intervention services.

In a 2008 report released by America's Promise Alliance, Detroit graduation rates were reported at only 24.9%, the lowest in the country. NASN President Donna Mazyck stressed the critical link between health and wellness and academic success. "Improving school nurse-to-student ratios will increase graduation rates" said Mazyck. "School nurses make a difference in the lives of students by enabling the removal of health-related barriers to learning."

Laurie Feldkamp, a school nurse in Dearborn, serves a caseload representative of the Michigan average. Laurie divides her time between 4,000 students in eight school buildings: one high school, two middle schools, four elementary schools and an early college. She cares for students with a multitude of health issues, including illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, food allergies and epilepsy. Additionally, she sees students with acute illnesses, injuries and substance abuse and mental health issues. Nurse Feldkamp also provides care for students in the Early Childhood Developmental Delay Program and students with autism.

Julia Lechtenberg, President of the Michigan Association of School Nurses says, “One health-care professional cannot be expected to care for thousands of people; the same applies to school nurses attending to student populations. It is time for Michigan to invest in the future of our children. Every child deserves a school nurse.”

The National Association of School Nurses is a non-profit specialty nursing organization, incorporated in 1977, which represents school nurses exclusively. NASN has over 13,000 members and 51 affiliates, including the District of Columbia and overseas. The mission of the NASN is “to advance the delivery of professional school health services to promote optimal health and learning in students.” To learn more about NASN, please visit us on the web at www.nasn.org or call 866-627-6767.

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