



## MASN Testimony before the School Aid and Education Appropriations Committee

May 14, 2008

Presented by Julia Lechtenberg RN, MSN, NCSN  
President of the Michigan Association of School Nurses (MASN)

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. My name is Julia Lechtenberg and I am the current president of the Michigan Association of School Nurses (MASN). On behalf of the MASN, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. A copy of my testimony has been provided to you.

There is no more critical mission in today's world than the education of our young people. That is why I come before you today to share our concerns regarding the health and safety of children in the school setting.

Today, the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) issued a press release which reveals Michigan is ranked 49<sup>th</sup> (second to the last) in the nation for the school nurse to student ratio. Unfortunately, no one in Michigan can either confirm or deny NASN's estimated ratio of one school nurse for every 4,274 students in Michigan, because ***no one in this state collects this type of data.*** Michigan is only one of eight states without a State School Nurse Consultant.

Children and adolescents in the educational setting deserve an environment that promotes optimal learning.

- Meeting the health needs and removing barriers to learning of students are particularly challenging within the educational system due to an increased number of complex individual student health needs, such as asthma, severe food allergies, and diabetes.
- No matter what, children and adolescents will continue to have health needs that must be met in the educational setting in order to experience academic success.

School districts within the state of Michigan address the health and safety needs of children differently.

- Michigan does not have policies, procedures or minimal standards of care for students with health issues.
- This creates a dangerous situation for students.

MASN's top public policy priority is the health and safety of children in the State of Michigan. **We believe that this can best be attained by establishing a State School Nurse Consultant position within the Michigan Department of Education.** A State School Nurse Consultant is a specialist in school nursing practice and school health services who works with the state departments, school districts and school nurses to promote quality school health services and programs that address the broad medical needs of students. The State School Nurse Consultant's primary role is to:

- Promote a safe and healthy learning environment for children/adolescents in Michigan schools by developing and supporting state policy, legislation, guidelines, standards, and quality assurance measures.
- Collect and analyze a variety of education and school health data that can ultimately provide a picture of school health in their state. The data includes prevalence of health conditions, health indicators, risk behaviors, emerging trends, as well as patterns of service delivery and effectiveness.

**State School Nurse Consultants Generate Revenue:**

- Massachusetts – State School Nurse Consultant collected data through school nurses resulting in \$45,000,000 of Medicaid dollars reimbursed to the cities and towns from the federal government.
- Connecticut State School Nurse Consultant secured 1 million for the last two consecutive years for school based outreach programs, \$200,000 from HUD to implement lead poisoning training program, \$800,000 from the tobacco dollars to develop K-8 prevention programs and \$50,000 for Safe and Drug Free Schools.
- California – State School Nurse Consultant secured a Coordinated School Health and HIV grant from the CDC.
- Missouri – State School Nurse Consultant secured numerous grants to address health issues impacting learning such as diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, sickle cell anemia and mental health.
- Maryland – State School Nurse Consultant secured grants for violence prevention, mental health, HIV prevention, nutrition and wellness. The State School Nurse Consultant avoided the need for legislation which would have required additional state funds by developing and implementing guidelines on diabetes management through school nursing programs.

**MASN strongly supports safe and appropriate health care for ALL children in the educational setting. We are requesting that language be added to the school aid budget establishing the State School Nurse Consultant position. We want to be clear that MASN strongly supports Michigan Model, School Based Health Centers and the addition of this language to the school aid budget should not be at the expense of other vital programs. However, the State School Nurse Consultant is equally important and would service all students in the state of Michigan.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Julia Lechtenberg RN, MSN, NCSN  
MASN President

948 Briston  
Rochester Hills, MI 48307  
MASN Phone: 248-853-8311  
Cell Phone: 248-961-5822  
lechtenj@yahoo.com