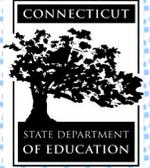




THE SCHOOL NURSE BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2012



Stephanie G. Knutson, MSN, RN School Nurse Consultant

Connecticut State Department of Education Health Services Program Information Survey 2004-2012

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), as part of its ongoing efforts to support and expand school health services provided to Connecticut students, has completed its ninth year of data collection regarding school health services. This data collection process is designed to assist the CSDE to understand the status of school health services in Connecticut school districts, the needs of school districts and students in the area of school health services and progress being made in these areas over time.

Each year, the Coordinator of School Nursing in each of the 169 Connecticut school districts has been asked to complete the online survey in order to track trends in the status of school health services and needs over time. Response rates have ranged from 61 to 88 percent over the nine-year period. During 2011-12, a total of 169 questionnaires were distributed with 119 received in time to be analyzed, yielding a response rate of 70.4 percent. The CSDE's goal for 2012-13, is a response rate of 100 percent!

School Health Services Conclusions and Recommendations

Data resulting from the ninth year of survey administration included in the following conclusions regarding school health services in Connecticut:

- optional services provided by participating districts to public school students generated close to 11,000 referrals to outside providers. These numbers suggest a continued need for and interest in screenings in these areas;
- students in private, non-profit schools served by responding districts were more likely than their public school counterparts to receive optional services for Body Mass Index Screening during 2011-12. These students were as, or less likely to use other optional services;
- in general, nurse-to-student ratios decrease as grade levels increase. Slightly less than 20 percent of secondary schools have only one nurse to more than 750 students;
- a wide range of health care specialists are employed by districts. The most common specialists are assistive technology specialists and mental health consultants;
- Connecticut school districts are caring for children with a wide range of physical, developmental, behavioral and emotional conditions;
- Connecticut districts have over 12,000 students with documented dietary needs including nut, wheat, milk and shellfish allergies;
- districts regularly prescribe emergency medications as needed including glucagon, diastat and epinephrine;
- Connecticut nurses continue to spend an average of 28 hours per week on routine nursing interventions;
- districts report a need for more mental health services and programs that promote a healthy lifestyle;
- during 2011-12, 1,336 9-1-1 calls were made by Connecticut public and private, non-profit schools;
- in responding districts, 4,953 public school students and 48 private school students were uninsured during 2011-2012;
- a wide variety of software is used by Connecticut districts to collect and record school health information. Almost 14 percent of responding public districts and 56 percent of responding private, non-profit districts reported having no software;
- many Connecticut school health staff report some involvement in teaching topics which include: risk-taking behaviors; Human Sexuality; sensitivity to food-allergies in others; injury prevention; and dental health. Some school health staff report filling a support role for teachers who facilitate health-related topics; and
- districts provide a wide range of suggestions of services that would increase district satisfaction with the provision of health services to students. District suggestions include fiscal and non-fiscal resources, information on available resources, communication with state agencies and training for staff.

The full report is located on the CSDE's Health Promotion Services/School Nurse Web site at www.ct.gov/sde/schoolnurse.

Attention: School Nurses in the Millstone Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ)

2012-13 Supply of Potassium Iodide Tablets

Potassium iodide, also known by its chemical name “KI,” is an over-the-counter drug that protects the thyroid from absorbing radioactive iodine, *one* of the possible radioactive isotopes that may be released during an incident at a nuclear power plant. KI offers no protection against other types of radioactive emissions.

The State of Connecticut’s Radiological Emergency Response Plan does include a “precautionary transfer” of all Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) school children to pre-designated host communities at a much earlier nuclear classification in the event of a power plant incident. This precautionary transfer procedure should all but eliminate the need to administer KI to your children while in school care. However, it is still essential that schools in the Millstone EPZ zones have the KI tablets available in the event that the precautionary transfer is not possible.

The State of Connecticut, working in conjunction with the nine municipalities (see below) that form the 10-mile Millstone EPZ has provided schools with “Go Kits” which are portable containers storing KI tablets, pill splitters, informational hand-outs and permission forms which should be sent home with students every year to be updated. **Please verify with your school’s emergency team that these “Go Kits” are in place for the 2012-13 school year.**

Should your school need additional KI tablets, these are available from your city or town’s Emergency Management Director. His or her contact information can be found in the municipal section of your telephone book or on the internet.

For sample parent letters, English or Spanish KI Fact Sheets or any additional information, please contact Peter Sandgren at the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection at 860-256-0875, or peter.sandgren@ct.gov.

The following is a description of the towns that are in the **Millstone EPZ**:

ZONE A

- WATERFORD - Areas south of Route 1 to Long Island Sound.
- EAST LYME - Areas south of Interstate 95 to Long Island sound.

ZONE B

- WATERFORD - central - areas from Interstate 395 and Route 85 to Route 1.
- EAST LYME - central - from Route 1 to Interstate 95.
- NEW LONDON - entire town.

ZONE C

- WATERFORD- north of Interstate 395 and Route 85.
- EAST LYME- north of Route 1.
- MONTVILLE- southern portion of town - areas south of Grassy Hill Road, Chesterfield Road, Route 163 and Depot Road.

ZONE D

- OLD LYME- entire town.
- LYME - southeastern portion - areas east of Route 156 and south of Beaver Brook Road to the East Lyme town line.

ZONE E

- GROTON CITY - entire city.
- GROTON TOWN - entire town.
- LEDYARD - southwestern portion - areas south of Hurlbutt Road, Whalehead Road and Sandy Hollow Road to Route 117. **NO SCHOOLS IN THIS PART OF LEDYARD.**

Tools for Improving your Indoor Air Quality IQ by Ken Roy

“A healthy school physical environment is critical to a successful learning environment... There are three factors that influence the physical environment:

- the school facility and its campus;
- the presence of any hazardous biological or chemical agent, including those detrimental to one’s health; and
- physical conditions such as humidity, lighting, noise and temperature.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, poor maintenance of school facilities and campuses causes increases in illnesses for students and teachers, creating higher absenteeism rates, less time staying on task in the classroom, and reduced academic achievement (2012). Programs that foster healthy indoor air quality can improve health, provide a better learning environment, improve test scores, and improve adult productivity in the school system - all helping to yield better academic outcomes.”

To learn more about Connecticut’s *Tools for Schools Program* contact Kenny Foscue, Epidemiologist with the Connecticut State Department of Public Health at Kenny.foscue@ct.gov.

The full article is located in **Science Scope**, November 2012.

Connecticut State Department of Public Health (DPH) Fact Sheet

Hand Sanitizers Advice for using gels, foams and wipes

Hand sanitizers are designed as a personal care product to be used if soap and water are not available. They contain ingredients to help reduce the number of germs on the hand. They are not effective if hands have visible dirt on them. Frequent hand washing is the best way to avoid getting sick and spreading illness.

Recommendations for Effective Hand Washing

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s general policy on hand hygiene recommends the following methods to prevent transmission of bacteria and viruses:

- washing hands with soap and water at least 20 seconds or as long as it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song twice;
- cleaning hands using an alcohol-based hand-rub sanitizer that contains greater than 60 percent alcohol (ethyl alcohol, ethanol, isopropanol, isopropyl). These products significantly reduce the number of germs on the skin and are fast acting. However, they are not effective if hands are visibly dirty. Germs, organic matter and natural oils on hands create a barrier that blocks the effectiveness of the sanitizer. There is a danger of small children ingesting alcohol-based hand sanitizers by mistake; and
- cleaning hands using a non-alcohol based hand-rub gel sanitizer. Non-alcohol based hand sanitizers (foam) have as the active ingredient benzethonium chloride, a quaternary ammonia. These sanitizers have not been proven to be as effective as the alcohol-based sanitizers against viruses.

The Hand Sanitizer Fact Sheet is located on the DPH Web site at http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/hand_sanitizer_factsheet.pdf.

Professional Development Opportunity



The Connecticut State Department of Education
presents the following opportunity for school nurses,
school nurse supervisors and administrators

Spring 2013 School Nurse Supervisor Conference

Tuesday, April 9, 2013, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Crowne Plaza Cromwell, 100 Berlin Road,
Cromwell, Connecticut 06416



Facilitator.....Stephanie Knutson, MSN, RN,
School Health Consultant,
Connecticut State Department
of Education
Fee.....\$50.00 per person
CEUs.....0.5
Register by3/26/13
Course #1225300624

This activity will provide school nurse supervisors with information on multiple state initiatives and trends in the state. Additionally, school nurse supervisors will have the opportunity to network with colleagues.

As a result of attending this conference,
participants will:

- gain additional knowledge in the role of school nurse in mandated reporting and behavioral health;
- gain additional knowledge in the role of school health services in school reform;
- gain additional knowledge in health promotion of school nursing services; and
- gain additional knowledge in state-mandated immunization regulations.

Register online at www.registereastconn.org.

Click on the event title. You will need to input your four-digit PIN number and a valid Purchase Order (P.O.) number from your school. Note: If you will be paying by a personal check and not using a P.O., you will receive an invoice via e-mail to send in with your check.

If you have questions regarding registration, or have difficulty using the online form, e-mail conferenceoffice@eastconn.org, or call 860-455-1533.

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