

INTRODUCTION

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The School Health Manual is intended to provide guidance to school nurses for school nursing practice.

The Manual is designed for school health services to include:

- Current laws and rules,
- Policies, and
- Best practice procedures.
- Information and resources to enhance school nurse practice.

The first Manual was published in 1974. The Maine School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) and The Maine Department of Education (DOE), working with personnel from the Department of Human Services, regularly update the manual. A School Health Manual Committee meets regularly during the school year to review sections of the manual on a revolving basis to insure the most current research and evidence is used in this manual.

PHYLOSOPHY

Healthy children learn better. Children must feel well if they are going to be active and successful learners and likely to realize full potential. School-age children are susceptible to increased social, emotional and physical problems. It is essential that health related concerns be recognized and adequately addressed in order to ensure that children reach their full potential.

Children with complex medical conditions or technological needs have the legal right to access health-related services within the school setting. Certified school nurses are essential to meet the increasing needs of students with complex health care needs.

SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HISTORY

The School Nurse Advisory Committee was started in 1974, with recognition by Commissioners of the Department of Educational and Cultural Services and the Department of Human Services. The function was to review existing state-level programs and services in schools, and make recommendations for improvement. Membership included School and Public Health Nurses and was jointly staffed by DOE and DHS. The report and suggested policies developed by the Committee were sent to Superintendents in August 1977.

July 1977-School Health Board of Directors was developed from the Committee, and endorsed by Commissioners of Department of Educational and Cultural Services (DECS) and Department of Human Services (DHS). The membership was broadened to include the Department of Mental Health and Corrections, physicians, school nurses, health educators, teachers and school administrators. The Board met at least quarterly to review legislation, policies, procedures and departmental grants related to school health programs and made recommendations to the Commissioners. The Board worked to provide ongoing educational programs, primarily through the Department of Human Services (Public Health Nursing and Maternal and Child Health).

August-1985 School Health Advisory Committee emerged from the Board, with a memo of recognition from Commissioners of DECS, DHS, and Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

July-1988, Governor's Cabinet, Interdepartmental Council agreed that SHAC would remain independent.

1992-Staff support from Department of Education (DOE) was lost with deletion of the School Nurse Coordinator position.

January 2001-the School Nurse Consultant position was reinstated.

ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE COMMITTEE OVER THE YEARS

- Standards of practice and policy guidelines for school health services, including training programs and the school health manual.
- Immunizations, including recommendations on legislation and rules, updates on practice, annual reporting and suggestions regarding implementation of programs.
- Spinal screening legislation and rules, initial and revised.
- Policies regarding HIV and blood borne infections.
- Study to determine the need and to establish criteria for the first Position of School Nurse Coordinator and delineation of need and functions to successfully re-establish the position.

- Survey of medically fragile children in schools, 1991.
- Intensive work on administration of medications in schools completed in 2004, including a comprehensive study of the medications that are being administered (1999) and a train the trainer module for school nurses. A training manual was developed specifically for unlicensed personnel in the school setting and an accompanying training video was developed. (2005)
- Various screening protocols, including revisions in vision screening.
- Discussions on school sports and physical examinations protocol.
- Medication field trip policy/procedure in collaboration with Maine Board of Pharmacy, 2001.
- Dissemination and clarification of medical information to school administrators.
- Establish liaison relationships to implement the coordinated school health program model in Maine schools.
- Disseminated through the web, the Maine School Emergency Manual-2001.
- Guidelines for delegation/oversight of health tasks by non-licenses personnel-2002.
- Completion of the web-based school health manual at www.maine.gov/education/sh/index
- Pandemic Influenza planning in collaboration with the Maine Association of School Nurses (MASN)
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SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SHAC)

The School Health Manual Committee meets on the **third Tuesday** of every month between September and June at the Burton Cross Office Building in Augusta. Membership includes school nurses, health educators, school administrators, physicians, family practitioners, parents, and key stakeholders from the DOE and DHHS, Maine CDC including Immunization, Chronic diseases, School-Based Health Centers, Public Health Nursing and the Board of Nursing. The staff person is the school nurse consultant. SHAC provides a vital communications link between all of these stakeholders in developing protocols and guidance for school nursing practice in Maine. If you are interested in becoming a member of SHAC, contact Nancy Dube, School Nurse Consultant at nancy.dube@maine.gov

SCHOOL HEALTH MANUAL COMMITTEE

The School Health Manual Committee is a subcommittee of SHAC that meets on the first Tuesday of each month from October to June. This group is charged with reviewing the most recent research and evidence-based practice information related to children's health

and incorporating that knowledge into sections of the School Health Manual. Once drafted, the proposed section is sent to SHAC for final review and adoption. The manual committee is committed to updating the manual on an ongoing basis to insure the latest research and evidence-based information is available for school nurses to use in their practice.

COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMS

As health services are one of the eight components of coordinated school health programs, it is important to mention the connection with the other seven components. Health services do not exist in isolation. There is collaboration with health and physical education, physical activity, school counseling, physical and behavioral health services, health promotion and staff wellness, school nutrition and food services, school environment, school climate and youth, parent, family and communities. These make up coordinated school health programs and all are vital links to insuring student and health and success in schools. School nurses play a role in all these areas and are encouraged to follow this model of health in their schools.

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