STATEMENT

The California School Nurses Organization asserts that the Credentialed School Nurse, as a pivotal member of the school or district coordinated school health and safety program, address the health care needs of school children as they relate to education. The Credentialed School Nurse, as the supervisor of health, is a leader in supporting student success in the multifaceted role of planner, educator, coordinator, health care provider, communicator, and advocate. The scope of practice of the Credentialed School Nurse is dynamic. New paradigms are evolving for school health services as school systems develop coordinated school health programs to address the diverse and complex health problems of today’s students.

The Credentialed School Nurse is a bachelor’s degree prepared Registered Nurse, Public Health Nurse licensed by the California Board of Registered Nursing and credentialed as a School Nurse by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Credentialed School Nurses hold current cardiopulmonary resuscitation and have knowledge of basic to advanced first aid principles.

The Credentialed School Nurse uses the nursing process, clinical expertise and professional judgment to design and implement health services programs that ensure that all students will receive the optimum benefit from their educational experience. This is accomplished by working collaboratively with students, families, teachers, other members of the multidisciplinary team, and utilizing resources within the community, to meet the physical, mental, emotional and social health needs of students.

The Credentialed School Nurse’s role includes, but is not limited to:

- Assessing and evaluating student health and developmental status;
- Communicating with students, families, caregivers, and health care providers;
- Interpreting assessments and medical information to school staff working with the students;
- Designing and implementing an Individualized School Health Plan, Emergency Care Plan, Individual Educational Plan and/or Section 504 Plan related to health care needs or chronic illnesses;
- Determining the appropriate level of care for students with specialized health care needs and training, monitoring and supervising licensed and unlicensed staff;
- Providing school nursing case management services for students;
- Counseling students and parents regarding health or school related issues and providing information and referral to community services;
- Administering and training and supervising school staff in assisting students with routine and emergency medications;
- Serving as a health consultant and providing inservice programs to staff on a variety of health topics;

(This Position Statement is continued on next page)
California School Nurses Organization

Position Statement

ROLE OF THE CREDENTIALED SCHOOL NURSE (Page 2)

STATEMENT (Continued)

- Developing curriculum and assisting in delivery of comprehensive health education to students;
- Promoting a healthy school environment for emotional and physical safety;
- Performing federal and state mandated tasks including but not limited to emergency care; child abuse reporting; communicable disease control, prevention and follow up; and CHDP, audiometric, scoliosis and vision screening;
- Providing routine direct healthcare services and referrals;
- Maintaining, protecting and managing confidential electronic and written student health records.

RATIONALE

The role of the Credentialed School Nurse is defined in Education Code Section 49426. It reads, in part: “School nurses strengthen and facilitate the educational process by improving and protecting the health status of children and by identification and assistance in the removal or modification of health-related barriers to learning in individual children. The major focus of school health services is the prevention of illness and disability, and the early detection and correction of health problems. The Credentialed School Nurse is especially prepared and uniquely qualified in preventive health, health assessment and referral procedures.”

California schools must address the diverse and complex health problems of today’s students. In addition to health issues, schools must cope with societal pressures related to immigration, violence, changing family structure, homelessness, substance abuse, and poverty. Many of our children come with issues that make learning difficult. In addition, students may have undetected health conditions, poorly managed chronic illnesses or complex medical problems that were previously only managed at hospital or rehabilitation settings. Economic conditions and increased acuity of health problems have required the addition of other licensed and unlicensed assistive personnel to assist in meeting health care needs of students.

As the health care expert within the school and an advocate for students and families, the Credentialed School Nurse uses professional skills, nursing judgment and leadership ability to create a safe and healthy school environment that supports the well being, academic success and life-long achievement of students.
References:


