STATEMENT

The California School Nurses Organization supports all students deserve access to direct health care by a credentialed school nurse. The use of telecommunications technology can provide a valuable resource to augment the practice of school nursing. The increasing application of technology in the delivery of health care enhances the practice of school nursing and allows greater access to health services in a variety of ways. The intent of technology in the school health program is to augment, not replace, the diligent care the professional credentialed school nurse provides. CSNO does not support contracting for telehealth services utilizing a video camera and distant evaluation as a method to replace credentialed school nurses.

RATIONALE

The National Association of School Nurses identifies school nursing as “a specialized practice that advances the well-being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students”. The credentialed school nurse strengthens and facilitates the educational process by working not just with the child in the health office but by involving the family, the child’s medical care provider, school staff and community in identifying and assisting in the removal or modification of health-related barriers to learning.

Telecommunications technology assists the credentialed school nurse in working with all the people concerned with a student’s health.

“Technology that gathers and electronically transmits interactive consultation between the school nurse and health care provider can serve as an adjunct to health care, especially for students in rural areas with few health care providers. This technology clearly has the potential to enhance health care of all students. Fundamental to its effectiveness, however, is the presence of a licensed professional on both ends of the transmission - one to assure accurate input and subsequent directed intervention and the other to provide diagnosis and prescriptive interventions.” (NASN, 2006). The utilization of telehealth technology to supplant a credentialed school nurse raises grave concerns around the central issue of diligent care for students. Concerns include, but are not limited to, the following issues:

- Quality of care
- Confidentiality
- Student safety
- Compliance with California Educational Code and Federal laws
- Accept medical orders only from California licensed health care providers
- Policies and protocols which vary by district

(This position statement continues on next page)
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- Assessments and identification of health issues
- Follow-up with families and health care providers
- Training and supervision of unlicensed assistive personnel
- Parental rights
- Emergency response
- Development and implementation of Section 504 and ISHP plans
- Documentation
- Jurisdiction
- Liability
- Counseling and education for students, families and staff around health issues

Credentialed school nurses are licensed professionals uniquely qualified to provide health services in the school setting. Credentialed school nurses possess the professional ability to assess students, make nursing judgments, and develop and implement plans that allow students to achieve success in the educational setting. Technology can and does enhance the practice of school nursing; it cannot and must not, what so ever, be viewed as a replacement for a credentialed school nurse.

References:


California Education Code Section 49423. Medication in school.

California Education Code Section 49423.5. Specialized physical healthcare services.

California Education Code Section 49452. Sight and hearing test.

California Education Code Section 49452.5, Scoliosis screening notice.


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