UNLICENSED ASSISTIVE PERSONNEL IN SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

STATEMENT

The California School Nurses Organization endorses the employment and appropriate designation of Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP) to assist the credentialed school nurse, including assisting with medication and the provision of limited specialized physical health services. Safe scheduling of health services to students requires that the credentialed school nurse utilize professional nursing judgment to:

- Obtain and assess the accuracy and appropriateness of physician orders and parent consent for specialized health care procedures or medications.
- Develop and communicate a written Individualized School Health Plan, (ISHP), Section 504 Plan and/or Emergency Care Plan in collaboration with family, health care providers, school team and student.
- Determine and document the level of care and supervision necessary to insure the safety of the student receiving the medication or specialized health care procedure.
- Provide both standardized and child-specific training prior to scheduling and designating service(s).
- Monitor and document the competency and performance of the UAP no less frequently than annually and more frequently as determined by the performance of the UAP and the complexity of the specialized health care procedure.
- Review the written plan annually for any modifications or changes based on new physician orders and parent input.
- Ensure that written contracted agency’s policies and procedures for the task or activity is in the appropriate school file.

California Education Code Section 49423.5 specifies that specialized healthcare services may only be assigned to UAPs if they are determined to meet the following criteria:

(A) Routine for the pupil.
(B) Pose little potential harm for the pupil

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(C) Performed with predictable outcomes, as defined in the individualized education program of the pupil.

(D) Does not require a nursing assessment, interpretation, or decision-making by the designated school personnel.

It is imperative that the credentialed school nurse has the decision-making authority, supervisory responsibility, professional accountability, administrative support and availability of necessary resources to ensure safe care for all students. Certain procedures that require nursing assessment or monitoring can only legally be performed by a Registered Nurse or delegated to a Licensed Vocational Nurse, including, but not limited to, insulin injections via syringe or pump device, reinserting the insulin pump device, reinserting a nasogastric or gastrostomy feeding tube and the administration of other medications that are not legally authorized or that require nursing judgment or assessment.

California School Nurses Organization encourages parent involvement with the care of the student and the strong collaboration and partnership. Parent consent is necessary in the provision of care to the student. Physician’s Order is a written instruction of care for the student by a California licensed health care provider and should not be substituted for a parent’s authorization. UAP functions under a licensed professional.

RATIONALE

Due to advances in medical technology and increased integration of students with specialized health needs into regular classrooms, there are more such students attending their neighborhood schools. Federal law mandates that students with health related disabilities have access to free and appropriate educational programs and related services. The credentialed school nurse, as the school health professional, is the only school staff member qualified and legally authorized to determine the plan for delivery of specialized physical health care services.

Definitions:

1. Licensed Credentialed School Nurse (school nurse) is a registered nurse, licensed by the California State Board of Nursing as defined in #2 below. The credentialed school nurse holds a baccalaureate or higher degree from a college/university and a School Nurse Services credential from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The credential is granted after the registered nurse completes a Commission-approved post-graduate school nurse program.

2. Registered Nurse (RN) is a graduate of a formal nursing education program (two year or four year baccalaureate degree), who is legally authorized (licensed) to practice nursing by the California State Board of Registered Nursing after passing the National Council Licensure Examination.

3. Unlicensed assistive personnel are health clerks/assistants, health aides, teachers, teacher aides or other non-licensed personnel. It is strongly recommended that unlicensed assistive personnel have current CPR and first aid training. If the UAP is performing a specialized health care procedure CPR is required.

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4. Direct supervision means that the supervisor shall be present in the same building as the person being supervised and available for consultation and/or assistance.

5. Indirect supervision means that the supervisor is available to the qualified designated school personnel, either in person or through electronic means to provide necessary guidance, consultation and referral to appropriate care and services as needed.

6. Immediate Supervision means that the credentialed school nurse is physically present next to the student and UAP who is providing close supervision and/or assistance.

References:
California Education Code Section 49423. Assistance with medication during school day.