



California School Nurses Organization

Position Statement

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

STATEMENT

The California School Nurses Organization strongly supports comprehensive, age appropriate, medically accurate and research based health education about the use and abuse of various substances, including the biology of addiction. Substance use/abuse education should include but not be limited to alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, prescription and non prescription drugs, inhalants and anabolic steroids.

Credentialed school nurses should initiate, participate and/or cooperate in school and community activities designed to prevent and/or treat the problem of substance use and abuse. Credentialed school nurses, by virtue of their education and preparation, are qualified to provide counseling regarding health issues associated with substance use and abuse and to advocate for students by providing information and education that helps in the prevention of student participation in harmful activities. The credentialed school nurse may also assist students and families with resources for cessation, treatment and recovery programs and may provide on-going support and encouragement.

The California School Nurses Organization also supports legislation to assist in prevention and treatment programs, as well as encouraging public and private agencies to develop programs that increase the availability of information regarding the health consequences of substance use and abuse.

RATIONALE

Substance use and abuse is recognized as a community health problem, medical disease and a symptom of physical, social and/or emotional problems among children and youth. Student surveys show that substance use and abuse is still a significant problem. It is the largest preventable cause of illness and premature death among youth in the United States. Health counseling and education provide students with knowledge and skill in decision-making, personal value identification, problem solving, communication and contact with a trusted adult, all of which strengthen the student's ability to make healthier choices.

References:

California Healthy Kids Survey and the California Student Survey: Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use.(2008). Retrieved June 17, 2010 from West Ed Website: <http://www.wested.org>

National Association of School Nurses Issue Brief: Substance Use and Abuse.(2003). Retrieved June 17, 2010 from National Association of School Nurses Website: <http://www.nasn.org>

National Youth Risk Behavior Survey:(2009), Retrieved June 17, 2010 from the Center For Disease Control Website: [http:// www.cde.gov/yrbss](http://www.cde.gov/yrbss).

California School Nurses Organization Position Statement Adopted: 2/87,
Statement last revised: 11/10 Board of Directors, California School Nurses Organization