WHAT’S A KEYSTONE?

“School Nurses: The Keystones in the Arch of Student Health & Success!”

By Judith Morgitan M.Ed, BSN, RN, CSN President Elect & Conference Chair

As the new President Elect I have the distinct role of also being Conference Coordinator. President Cheryl Peiffer, Past President Karen Flad, and the Conference Committee are guiding me through this new task as I climb each monumental step.

My first assignment was to develop an Annual Conference theme. Knowing that our PASNAP logo includes a keystone shape and that our great state of PA is also nicknamed the “Keystone State”, I quickly checked out the dictionary. Merriam-Webster describes a “keystone” as a large stone at the top of an arch that locks the other stones in place. Keystones are something on which others depend upon for support. Synonyms for the word keystone include: foundation, basis, linchpin, cornerstone, base, principle, core, and heart.

It was obvious to me that I had to incorporate ”keystone” into our 2014 Conference Theme. As school nurses we are the keystone in the arch of student health and student success.

In NASN’s publication The Case for School Nursing, NASN provides us with evidence-based facts to support our stated theme:

♦ Repeated studies have identified that school nurses reduce absenteeism (Maughan, 2003) and the literature shows a higher nurse to student ratio is related to better attendance rates (Pennington & Delaney, 2008).
♦ School absence not only affects performance but also contributes to increased school drop-out rates, which in turn have economic and social repercussions for the individual, family, and community (Pennington & Delaney, 2008). Attendance predicts both dropout and achievement (Chan 2000; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Klem & Connell, 2004).
♦ Children who have poor health are 7 time as likely to miss 11 or more days of school a year due to illness or injury, than children who are in good health (Bloom & Day, 2005)
♦ Teachers and staff consider nurse interventions vital to eliminating barriers to student learning and improving health (Baish, Lundeen, & Murphy, 2011). Often the only healthcare professional in our school buildings, we indeed are that constant support and dependable base for our students. When school nurses are taken out of the arches of our school buildings, the support for all who enter and dwell within those buildings is weakened.

Never doubt the difference we make each day as school nurses when we enter through our school doors! Please join us at the 2014 PASNAP Conference, March 28 – March 30, 2014 in State College as we recognize and celebrate “School Nurses: Keystones of Student Health & Success!”

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WHAT'S A KEYSTONE?
A Message From Our President

The school year is at a halfway point. For many of us, even though there are challenges, it has been a productive and positive year so far as we build and maintain those relationships with our students, their parents, our staff and colleagues and the community.

Other colleagues face many challenges of student to nurse ratio, multiple building coverage, distance to travel between buildings, administrative support and budget shortfalls.

Please consider attending the PASNAP annual conference on March 28-30. There will be great speakers, increased opportunity to visit with vendors, time to interact with other school nurses, and the hospitality of the Penn Stater. See the great posters done by your colleagues, support the Legislative Auction, and congratulate our Excellence in Nursing Region School Nurses. Remember that early bird registration ends on February 24th.

Thanks to Judy Morgitan and the conference committee for their hard work for organizing an impressive program of continuing education.

Congratulations to Cheryl Mattern, a former past President of PASNAP, has been elected by the National Association of School Nurses to represent the school nurses of Pennsylvania. We appreciate her commitment for the next four years to keep us connected with our National Association.

Members of the PASNAP Board of directors will be attending “Day On the Hill” at the Capitol in Harrisburg on March 11th. We will meet with key legislators on the current issues facing certified school nurses in Pennsylvania.

Work continues on the Certified School Nurse Evaluation Rubric. The Committee that started two years ago on this document, will meet again in the next week to evaluate and tweak the rubric from the evaluations that were done on the rubric this past fall.

The Evaluation tool is expected to be completed for use in the 2014-2015 school year.

I give a big thank you to those that serve on the Board of Directors. Their commitment, insight and support is one reason why Pennsylvania continues to be a leader in school health.

You, the school nurse, are the heart and soul of school health. Continue to do what you do best everyday…..caring for the school children of Pennsylvania with your knowledge, compassion and determination to make a difference. I look forward to seeing many of you at the conference in March.

PASNAP...An Act 48 Approved Provider

By Angela Dastolfo MS RN CSN

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website, “Continuing Professional Education is important in Pennsylvania. Act 48 of 1999 requires all Pennsylvania educators holding Pennsylvania Public School Certification including Instructional I and II, Educational Specialist I and II, Administrative, Supervisory, Letters of Eligibility and all vocational certificates to participate in ongoing professional education.”

Educators must earn the equivalent of six college credits, or 180 hours of continuing education programs every five years to maintain active certification status.

Certified School Nurses (CSNs) in Pennsylvania are Educational Specialists, and according to Act 48, must engage in appropriate continuing education activities in order to maintain the active certification necessary for public school employment in Pennsylvania.

As your professional organization in the state, Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners (PASNAP) has met the stringent requirements set by the PDE to be an approved provider of Act 48 credit.

PASNAP strives to provide high-quality, current, practical, and affordable continuing education options for its members and other CSNs in PA.

While most CSNs know of the Act 48 continuing education opportunities available at the annual conference, did you know that as an approved provider, PASNAP is authorized to submit continuing education credit to the PDE on your behalf?

PASNAP also provides continuing education for its members.
Furthering Advanced Practice Nursing

PASNAP scholarships available to support nurses’ education

By Michelle Ficca PhD, RN

School Nurse Scholarships

PASNAP awards three $500 scholarships to CSNs enrolled in a graduate program with the intention of continuing to practice in a school setting or an RN enrolled in a program to become a Certified School Nurse.

The purposes of the scholarships are to encourage and support a Certified School Nurse enrolled in a graduate program who is a member of PASNAP thereby increasing advanced practice nurses in the school setting and to encourage a registered nurse student to attain his/her educational goals thus increasing the number of Certified School Nurses working in the school health settings. Applicants must demonstrate that they have completed at least 6 credits of coursework and must be in good academic standing with the College/University.

A need for financial aid does not have to be established and each qualified applicant will have an equal opportunity to win the scholarship since it will be a random chance selection.

Applications are due March 15. Recipients of this scholarship are expected to write a short piece for the newsletter reflecting on how this award will help them realize their education goals.

Future Nurse Scholarship

PASNAP is proud to offer a $1000 award to a high school senior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. This scholarship was initiated in 2008 in memory of Richard Berritini, a Certified School Nurse for almost 15 years at Port Allegheny High School. He lost his life in 2008 serving for the National Guard in Afghanistan. We continue this scholarship in honor of all the nurses who have learned that the ability to care for others is a gift you will have with you always.

Applications must be submitted in their entirety by May 1st. The award will be sent in the student's name directly to the college or university of the winner's choice.

You can find applications for both scholarships at: www.pasnap.org

PASNAP RESEARCH

Helping to improve school nursing and provide a scientific basis for school nursing practice.

By Michelle Ficca PhD, RN

PASNAP funds research by school nurses that:

1. Improves the practice of school nursing.
2. Promotes and strengthens the role of the Certified School Nurse/Practitioner.
3. Encourages innovative delivery of school health services to children and adolescents.
4. Enhances family, student, and staff education regarding the importance of health care and preventive care. Proposals meeting requirements will undergo a blind review and rating procedure conducted by at least three members of the Board.

The deadline for research submission is: March 15. Please see www.pasnap.org for detailed information and the application for submission.

Directors. The grant will be awarded based on the overall ratings. The recipient will be notified in writing with the award announced at the Annual Conference.
Overwhelmed by the Volume? Teach Your Teachers to Help

Educating teachers on acceptable classroom health problem solving methods

By Melissa Bechtel  
MSN, BSN, RN, CSN

Are you overwhelmed by the number of students that you see in a school day? Have you considered teaching your staff about what you consider to be nonessential?

A reduction in nursing staff and increase in the number of students with complex healthcare needs in a rural primary elementary school in central Pennsylvania led this author to seek innovative ways to manage the number of student visits in a day. Focusing on the students who need the most nursing care and evaluating the school nursing capacity, guidelines were established for the teaching staff to evaluate the need for care.

A frequent concern among school nurses involves the lack of time in a school day to attend to the health care needs of their students. In a study by Simmons (2002) time constraints were the most frequently mentioned frustration by novice and expert school nurses.

Expert school nurses develop systems to prioritize needs, reduce the number of time-consuming tasks, and advocate for themselves based on their experiences. However, they do not spend time educating novice school nurses on these measures. Limited research is available to guide the novice school nurse on the topic of decreasing nonessential nursing office visits and utilizing the systems developed by expert school nurses.

Typically, many teachers have allowed the student to leave class to visit the nurse’s office despite the chief complaint. Sometimes office visits only required a bandage for a paper cut or lotion for dry skin. The time it takes for students to walk to the nurse’s office, wait for treatment if the nurse is busy with other students, and return to the classroom could take on the average 10 to 20 minutes. Layout of the building and proximity of the nurse’s office to classrooms are a factor impacting the time spent out of class too.

Teaching the Teachers to Help

To address this problem of nonessential office visits, an educational PowerPoint presentation was designed and shared with teachers on the first In-service day of school each year. Previous school year’s illness, injury, medication administration, and nursing procedure statistics were presented to the teaching staff. Additionally, a cumulative chart with the aforementioned data from the previous four years was given. Teacher names were not included in the classroom summary data that was shared with teachers. The range from lowest to highest number of office visits for the year was given. Discussion about the presentation ensued and focused on variables that are out of the teacher’s control such as when special area teachers (art, music, physical education, guidance) send a student to the nurse. Before and after school, cafeteria time (breakfast and lunch), substitute teachers, and parent requests for students to see the nurse are also variables that teachers cannot control.

Focusing on the student and what health need(s) may not be met is an essential part of this discussion.

This includes how the teacher should deal with the multiple requests that the same few students make to visit the school nurse. Academic, physical, or emotional considerations of the students must be considered. Delving into the reason why the student does not want to be in class will solve the problem for the student, teacher, and school nurse. Encouragement of good communication among the teacher, school nurse, guidance counselor and parents are suggested.

During the presentation to the teachers, the nurse discusses that the guidelines are not policy but rather suggestions. Student well-being should never be compromised. Elementary teachers in particular are familiar with common student behaviors including wellness or illness and often are good predictors of an impending illness. Teachers are encouraged to act on their intuition of elementary behaviors associated with illness, offering a level of respect among the school nurse and teaching staff. Seasoned teachers will have additional ideas for colleagues on how to deal with student requests.

See Overwhelmed, page 5
Overwhelmed by the Volume?

Providing Resources

Teachers received classroom first aid kits filled with bandages, gloves, petrolatum with applicators for chapped lips, and tooth necklaces for lost teeth. Practical application of how to use a bandage, control a minor nosebleed, and demonstration of the Heimlich maneuver culminated the presentation. First aid kit refills were provided throughout the school year. Educating teachers on acceptable classroom health problem solving methods gives the teachers the resources to feel confident in their decisions. Teachers will spend less time re-teaching lessons to students who were in the nurse’s office for reasons that a teacher could take care of in the classroom. Administrator support can be earned by sharing data on nursing office visits.

Communication is Key

The administrator of the school building should understand the reasons for the need to establish nurse’s office guidelines and know that the result will be increased student time in the classroom and more time for the school nurse to focus on essential nursing office visits. The school nurse should not expect nonessential nursing office visits to cease immediately after a teacher presentation of nursing office visit guidelines.

The benefits of decreasing non-essential nursing office visits resulted in students spending less time in the nurse’s office and more time in class, increase in nurse’s time to organize and participate in non-mandatory student health and well-being efforts, and increase nurse’s time for essential nursing office visits by students.

Offer Suggestions

Teachers can also benefit from concrete examples of appropriate versus inappropriate nursing office referrals. Written directions with suggestions can be helpful. Take time to review the table below for “Reasons to Refer Students to the Nurse’s Office vs. Not Referring and Helpful Alternatives. Brain storm with your peers and add your own ideas to the list.

References


Sample reference for teachers:
Reasons to Refer Students vs. Not Refer to the Nurse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do Send Students who have:</th>
<th>Do Not Send Students who have Alternatives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► difficulty breathing</td>
<td>► chapped lips □ supply of petrolatum given to classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► persistent coughing</td>
<td>► dry skin □ may use lotion unless allergic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► head injury, eye injury or musculoskeletal injury</td>
<td>► fatigue not related to illness □ rest in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► earache</td>
<td>► food/drink spill on clothing (unless saturated) □ use a paper towel and air to dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► vomiting</td>
<td>► stomachache while at lunch □ try to eat unless vomiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► cuts or abrasions not able to be treated in class</td>
<td>► complaint of cough without hearing a cough □ offer drinks of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► incontinence</td>
<td>► paper cut or cuticle tear □ wash hands and offer bandage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► nosebleed that does not stop after 1 minute of pinching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► illness or injury needing attention by nurse</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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“Day on the Hill”

Help Advocate for Students and School Health Issues

By Nancy Kaminski MSN CRNP RN CSN

PASNAP will hold their annual “Day on the Hill” on Tuesday, March 11, 2014. This is an opportunity for CSN’s from across the state to visit Harrisburg and meet with their legislators.

The day will begin with a breakfast from 8 am to 10 am. After the breakfast, PASNAP leadership will be meeting with key legislators and all CSN's attending are encouraged to use this time to visit your own state senator and representative. Be sure to call his/her office as soon as you know that you are attending to set up these important visits.

We will be providing you with talking points about important issues.

If you are planning to attend this event, please RSVP to Nancy Kaminski, legislative chair, at kaminski.nj@gmail.com by March 1.

Final details, including talking points about current legislation and school health concerns will be provided early in March to those who have RSVP'd.

Capitol Building Harrisburg, PA

Are You Following Chain of Command?

It is important that questions regarding school health issues follow the correct communication path.

Inquiries need to be directed to the Community Health Nurse for your county or to the State Health Center which is covering your county first.

The Department of School Health has been providing answers to the State Health Center nurses on our most frequently asked questions. If they don't know the answer to your question, they will then forward it to staff in Harrisburg.

They continue to make responding to these questions a priority. Please do not email Harrisburg directly.

If you have topics that you would like to have included in the 2014 School Health Update at the PASNAP Conference, all you have to do is forward your questions to your PASNAP Regional Representative by 3/15/14. A member from the Board of Directors will collect all suggestions and forward them to Beth Ann Bahn, State School Health Consultant, so they can be addressed during her presentation at the conference on Sunday.

Approved Provider

Continued from page 2

through regional meetings with appropriate Act 48 activities.

If you are not familiar with the region meeting format and opportunities, contact your Region Representative. Don’t know your region rep? Region Representatives, Board of Directors, conference information, Act 48 information and more are available on the PASNAP website, www.pasn.org.

Membership in PASNAP automatically provides you with membership in the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). The NASN website (www.nasn.org) has a continuing education menu. After completing an on-line course, or attending a NASN conference, simply submit the certificate with your Personal Professional ID number (PPID) to PASNAP for submission of your qualifying continuing education credits.
2014 Poster Presentations Needed
Share your ideas. Become a winner!

By Cheryl Mattern  M.Ed., BSN, RN, CSN

Whether you are a veteran school nurse or a relative novice, you know things that other nurses would love to learn. Share your ideas and programs at PASNAP’s annual poster presentation!

Participation is simple:
1. Using a standard 36” by 48” presentation trifold, create a poster featuring some facet of your practice.
2. Develop a handout conveying the important concepts of your poster. (Plan for approximately 300 nurses to attend the conference.
3. Bring your poster and handout to PASNAP’s annual conference at State College in March, where it will be displayed for other nurses to browse and learn.

All contributors will be given a Certificate of Participation to include in your professional portfolio.

In addition, the names of all participants will be included in a special drawing for free attendance at the 2015 PASNAP Conference in State College, March 27-29, 2015.

Here are some poster ideas:
— Your best bulletin board
— A health education program you presented for students, staff, or parents
— Implementation of an immunization clinic
— An inservice session for other school nurses
— An innovative way to address school health challenges
— Your original research

It’s simple. Just complete the registration form below and send to Cheryl Mattern via email: csmattern@gmail.com Then let those creative juices flow and share the results 3/28/14.

PASNAP’s Annual Poster Presentation March 28-30, 2014

Name of participant: ____________________________________________

Email: ________________________________________________________

Phone: ________________________________________________________

Take a Chance: Legislative Auction
Donations Benefit PAC

By Nancy Kaminski
MSN,CRNP,RN,CSN

The legislative committee will again hold a Chinese auction during the annual educational conference at the Penn Stater. This has been a popular conference activity and is our primary source of PAC (political action committee) fund donations. The PAC fund helps us support candidates who support the children’s issues that affect our students, and ensures that our voices are heard by the legislators of Pennsylvania.

This year, we already have had some great items for auction – including an AED, at least one handmade quilt, and gift baskets of all types. Items for auction will be on display and tickets will be sold during meals beginning at breakfast on Saturday morning of the conference.

Sheets of 25 chances will be sold for $10 each. Winners will be drawn at the end of the (Saturday) evening award program. Each region is asked to bring an item for the auction, but individuals are also welcome to donate something unique or something that would be useful to your colleagues - keep in mind what you would like to win! Please bring donations to the registration desk Friday upon your arrival.

Remember, when you donate an item or purchase a chance, you help promote our profession’s goals.
Did they *REALLY* just say that?

One particular school year I was administering TINE tests to middle school students. Upon doing the follow up readings, one boy’s was positive. I told him that he would be required to get a chest X-ray and send a note home to his parents explaining what was needed.

The next day he returned to my office and said, “My mom wants to know how I can be positive when I’m not even sexually active?”.  

By JoAnn Coleman BSN,RN,CSN

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As an experienced High School Nurse (24 years), I was sent to cover an elementary school for two days. The kids were so small! They just kept coming ...2 and 3 at a time. “John Smith” came in with a stomach ache. Right behind him came “John Doe” with a bumped head. Both were assessed, treated, and eventually sent back to class. About an hour later I saw “John” come in again. (I recognized the dinosaur shirt), and had him rest again while I called mom. When she asked to speak to her son, he came to the phone, talked for a few minutes, then turned to me to say, “Hey lady, that doesn’t sound like my mommy.” I had called the wrong “John’s” mom. What a day!

By Laura O’Malley RN,CSN

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Do you have a story, anecdote or “aha moment” you are willing to share with your peers?

- a heart warming narrative
- a student comment that made you grin from ear to ear
- a wonderful resource in the community, on the web, or for your smart phone
- a new way of doing something (or an old way that still works great!)
- an award or accomplishment that made you proud
- photos of you with your students, in your school or at a nursing activity

Send to kjverbel@gmail.com “attention newsletter “

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The PASNAP Pulse

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Charity Istone  

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Happy Valentine’s Day

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Go ahead....SMILE

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And laugh and giggle