We have all attended continuing education classes, workshops, and countless inservices on Emergency Preparedness. We all have our emergency “go kits” and our emergency plans with the hopes that we will never have to use them.

However, if there was a crisis situation in or around your district, do you know what district and community resources are available to your students?

Here are some things not necessarily anticipated, which became reality when safety dictated an extended period of “lockdown” was needed. Intermittent lock-down…No bus transportation for an entire neighborhood…No recess for 48 days (elementary students/teachers going stir crazy!!)…After school activities and athletic events cancelled … Helicopters flying overhead… Police, and military vehicles… School Closures...Faculty unable to go home….Temporary shelters set up.

On October 30, Halloween Eve, the suspect was captured by U.S. Marshals outside an abandoned airplane hanger near Tannersville, still within the boundaries of the school district.

Routine “as usual” returned 10/31.

But for the previous 48 days, there was nothing routine about it.
A Message From Our President

I encourage all of you to attend the annual PASNAP conference on March 27 – 29. The Pre-Conference is on Friday and Saturday is a one day conference ending with our Awards Banquet to honor our School Nurse Excellence Regional winners. Sunday is our Annual Meeting as we administer the oath to our next President, Judy Morgitan. We will be ending the conference with the Division of School Health Update from Beth Anne Bahn and our Legislative Update from our Legislative Consultant, Morgan Plant. I hope to see many of you there.

Now is the time to put a little extra money aside to attend the National Association of School Nurse Conference which is being held in Philadelphia on June 23 – 27. Let the numbers show the great support and great work we do in Pennsylvania for student health. It is our time to shine as we host school nurses from around the nation. Even if you cannot attend all the days of the conference….try to get to at least one or two days. It is a great opportunity to network with other school nurses as well as learn new things.

“Membership in numbers speaks loudly for our organization and our legislators. Every voice heard makes a difference.”

Included in this issue of The Pulse is the PASNAP Strategic Plan for 2015-2019 as accepted by the PASNAP Board of Directors. We have aligned our Strategic Plan with that of NASN. Please take the time to read, as this will be voted on at the Annual Business meeting at the conference on Sunday, March 29.

Enjoy the winter (for those that love the snow and winter activities) as we look forward to Spring. Put on your To-Do list….join PASNAP and register for the conference in March! Membership in numbers speaks loudly for our organization and our legislators.

Every voice heard makes a difference.

ARE YOU PREPARED?

Prepared, continued from page 1

Most fortunately no one was injured, and valuable lessons were learned. Students, and parents will often times contact the School Nurse for assistance in dealing with ailments that develop as a result of stress.

A list of district and community resources with contact names and numbers should be kept in an easily accessible place in every Health Office.

See Prepared, Page 14
Board of Directors Work to Align PASNAP Strategic Plan with NASN’s

By Cheryl Peiffer MBA,BS,RN, CSN

We are mid-year in the school year and know that most of you are still treading water to keep up with the quantity of work and still maintain that quality of care to our students.

To maintain Pennsylvania as a leader in the nation on school nursing, PASNAP Executive Board, along with the Board of Directors has worked to align our new strategic plan for the next four years with NASN’s.

This important document includes our organization’s overall goals for the next four years and strategies to achieve them. Please take the time to look over the revised plan. Share your feedback.

The PASNAP 2015-2019 Strategic Plan will be formally presented to the membership for approval at the Annual Meeting in March.

STRATEGIC PLAN
2015 – 2019

MISSION: The Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Nurse Practitioners (PASNAP) will provide the structure and leadership necessary to promote unity among all certified school nurses, to advance the professional practice of school health through continuing education, improving political awareness, and promotion of school nursing to assure optimal student health.

VISION: To be a leader in advocacy for school health in Pennsylvania

STRATEGIC PRIORITY- MEMBERSHIP

OUTCOME – Grow membership yearly by five percent

STRATEGIES:
1. Promote certified school nursing as a professional nursing specialty in the educational setting.
2. Create an infrastructure to grow membership
3. Offer programs and products based on member needs

OUTCOME – Maintain membership through renewal and new members

STRATEGIES:
1. Maximize use of communication technology
2. Continue to conduct a public relation campaign
3. Provide educational offerings, which are relevant to trends and issues in school health and leadership development

See Strategic Plan, page 4
STRATEGIC PRIORITY – ADVOCACY

OUTCOME – Influence stakeholder support for school nursing

STRATEGIES:

1. Promote the professional image of school nursing through certification for school nurses in Pennsylvania
2. Collaborate with community agencies, professional organizations and board liaisons to broaden resources available to the school community to provide excellence for child well-being and student health
3. Support the liaison to the National Association of School Nurses (NASN)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – FINANCIAL STABILITY

OUTCOME – PASNAP operating budget will be supported totally by PASNAP internal activities

STRATEGIES:

1. PASNAP will be a fiscally stable organization by development and review of the annual budget
2. Provide opportunities for growth and revenue

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – RESEARCH

OUTCOME – Encourage school nurses and nurse practitioners to engage in evidence based research

STRATEGIES:

1. School nurses and nurse practitioners will use evidence based research to evaluate and validate school health practice with alignment of position documents and clinical guidelines of NASN
2. Promote the expanded role of the certified school nurse as a health educator and leader in the innovative development of school health policies and procedures for safe and comprehensive care of students

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – GOVERENCE

OUTCOME – PASNAP will provide the structure and leadership for advancing school health in Pennsylvania

STRATEGIES:

1. Maintain an organizational structure that meets the needs of Pennsylvania’s certified school nurses and nurse practitioners
2. Advocate for the inclusion of the certified school nurse on private and public issues on the local, state and national level
3. Maintain unified membership with NASN
4. The Board of Directors will function in their legal, moral and ethical roles
PASNAP Scholarships and Research Award

Monies available. Deadlines approaching.

School Nurse Scholarships
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
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.

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

You can find applications for all at: www.pasnap.org

Make a Lasting Impression
Personal Business Cards: A Professional Must

By Cynthia Dougherty MSN, RN, NCSN

Take a look the next time you see two professional people meet each other for the first time. Chances are, they will shake hands and exchange business cards. If you are like most school nurses, you probably don’t have a business card.

Every school nurse needs a business card to network in the 21st century. Your personal business card is a professional way of exchanging essential contact information with someone or of presenting your contact information to another person. Some districts will provide you with a business card. ASK! Put it in the budget; you can buy cards on-line for about $10, or even make your own cards on your home computer.

Basic information includes your name, degrees/credentials, position, mailing address, email address and phone/fax numbers.

Keep cards available on your desk so you can hand one to a parent after a meeting. They can use it to call you for further information or questions. Enclose one when writing to a legislator about an educational/school nursing concern. Carry your business cards wherever you go, especially conferences.

If no one has ever asked you for your card, someone will soon. And they make the right impression every time you say “Here is my card.” Isn’t that better than writing your phone number on a napkin!

School Nurse Professionals, Drop off your business card to enter our raffle at the Public Relations Booth at this year’s conference for a chance to win a select PASNAP item. Don’t have one? It’s not too late. Order them today!
Best School Nurse Practices
Saving Children’s Lives
Improving Parental Adherence with Referrals for Abnormal Screenings

By Karen Coyne, MSN, CSN, RN

Problem Overview

Similar to most school screening programs, parents are asked to return a copy of our abnormal screening referral forms after taking their child the appropriate medical health provider for evaluation. Before my intervention, only 10% of forms were returned.

I work in a rural school district. Many of our students live on farms or in rural areas. Our district covers 205 square miles. I care for 789 students between 2 elementary schools. I have a health office assistant (also an RN) that covers the opposite school from where I am. Our district is reported to have about 40% of our families at or below poverty and we service many of those families with free or reduced school breakfast/lunch.

Program/Activity Description

My intervention is simple. I personally call each parent whose child has an abnormal screening to discuss my findings. I send the appropriate referral documentation and follow up in the spring with a phone call on the referrals not returned.

As a parent, myself, I find that too often I set aside or only glance at papers sent from the school, even those mailed to me. By calling the parents, I make a connection with a parent. A seed is planted. My follow-up call strengthens the importance of vision and hearing in the educational setting.

Program/Activity Outcome

This simple intervention has increased my referral return percentage dramatically from <10% to 78%. Last year I received reports or verified treatment on 36 out of the 46 students with abnormal screening results.

Story Highlights

This intervention saved a child’s life. In October of 2011, I called a single father with the report that his son had failed his vision screening. His left eye was 20/20 and his right eye was 20/200. While the student had not been experiencing any learning difficulties since he was able to see well with his left eye, no one was concerned.

His father and I spoke about the strain he was putting on his left eye and that having a comprehensive eye exam would be a good thing. I was skeptical that his father would follow through, so I flagged his chart.

Early in November, my principal called me in to his office, where the father was sitting. His father began to tell me that our conversation bothered him so he took his son to the eye doctor. His exact words to me, through his tears were "you saved my son's life".

His son was diagnosed with retinoblastoma. He had to have his eye removed and a prosthetic eye made. We supported student and family through the process and I am pleased to report the student is doing well in school and all his follow up appointments have been clear.

Honestly, if I had not called his father, I doubt he would have paid much attention to the referral. I would have followed up in the spring but that may have been too late. His family was flown to New York City by a private jet that was donated and had surgery at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer center. He was able to attend the Macy Thanksgiving parade prior to surgery.

See Best Practices, page 7
Best School Nurse Practices

Best Practices, continued from page 6

His father was so grateful for the simple gesture of calling him and explaining the importance and always shares with me his gratitude.

Words of Wisdom

I know that as school nurses we are busy and often overwhelmed with the daily health issues of our students. It only takes a few moments to make the call and as I have found, it can be life changing. I could make thousands of calls over my career, but to know that one made such a huge difference in the life of a child is priceless.

Every day school nurses make a difference in their student’s lives and this is just another example of that, but it has had a huge impact on my career.

Future Focus

I will continue my process of calling parents with referrals. I will continue to work toward 100% return on referrals. Any intervention that can improve a student's education is well worth the effort.

Editor’s Note– Story of Success

The Council On School Health, in collaboration with NASN, the American School Health Association and the School-Based Health Alliance, was excited to announce that Karen’s submission was selected as one of the top School Health Success Stories.

Her story was one of 4 selected, each of which was shared at the Council On School Health program during this year’s annual American Academy of Pediatrics conference.

Congratulations Karen!

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

Useful Apps, Websites or technology tips for you or the Health Room

iPads in the Health Room-BASD

By Susan Dalton BSN, RN,CSN

Bethlehem Area School District (BASD) is currently working with the Children’s Care Alliance (CCA) to allow a seamless exchange of student electronic health records between hospitals, schools, clinics and physician offices in the Lehigh Valley.

The participation in this innovative project is at no cost to the district and as part of this project iPads were issued to the BASD nurses. The nurses are happy to report that the iPads work very well for screenings and accident report recording.

According to Kathy Halkins, department chair for the school nurses, “the best part of this, when we are done we are done”. The iPads have eliminated the daunting task of pulling files, handwriting the data, entering the data into the computer and re-filing the student records. The nurses also take their iPad directly to an accident and record the student information right on site. This saves on time and it is very helpful to have vital student health information at the scene.

The iPad training sessions went very well and the BASD nurses look forward to learning more as they move forward with transforming student health records into an electronic format.

The goal of this project is the sharing of health information with other school districts and ultimately with hospitals and care providers.
Emergency Volunteering: SERVPA

Is volunteering for emergency disaster response efforts right for you?

By Karen Flad MSN RN CSN

Currently Pennsylvania has a statewide registry system called SERVPA, which is Pennsylvania’s online registry site for medical and non-medical volunteers to pre-register to volunteer for emergency disaster response efforts.

SERVPA is a secure, confidential volunteer registry site where you can register quickly and easily before an emergency situation. During registration you will be asked to provide background information about yourself and any given preferences or constraints to volunteering.

Completing this process does not guarantee that you will be called upon, nor does it mean that you must participate if called. If you are called to volunteer, you will have the opportunity to learn more about the specific event and the commitment required. You can then choose if volunteering for the specific event is right for you.

If you are interested, please register using the ServPA website: https://www.serv.pa.gov and follow the instructions there.

Help US to help YOU

If you or someone you know (family member, neighbor) has special needs that could impact their ability to evacuate or relocate in the event of an emergency, please consider registering them on the current state website, https://www.specialneedspa.org. This Registry is a cooperative effort between Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties, brought to you by the South-eastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force (SEPARTF).

Be Prepared for an Emergency

There are a number of very helpful resources for your family or business so you are better prepared for an emergency.

Visit https://www.ready.gov or https://www.readypa.org for more information. Be Informed, Make a Plan, Build a Kit and Get Involved! Ready.gov has free emergency preparedness publications available to the public.

Emergency Notification alerts are available for residents of the following counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties: If you are like many residents today, who only have a cellphone, and no regular land-line telephone at home, then you should enroll your cellphone number with your local notification system. The system can provide automated alerts or other information directly to your cell-phone and/or email accounts. You decide what you want to be notified about and the rest happens automatically.

Please visit www.readynotifypa.gov to sign up or for more information.
Consider National Certification

“Excellence, Professionalism, & Rigor in School Nursing Practice ”

By Angie Dastolfo MS, RN,NCSN

According to the National Association of School Nurses’ (NASN) website, “Certification represents a national standard of preparation, knowledge, and practice.” In Pennsylvania, school nurses are required to be certified according to the standards determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). National certification is voluntary and represents credentialing criteria determined cooperatively between NASN and the National Board for Certification of School Nurses (NBCSN).

Details regarding the certification process can be found on the NBCSN website. Minimum education, experience, and licensure standards must be met in order to apply to sit for the national certification exam. There are generally three testing windows at various times through the calendar year. The application process closes approximately one month prior to each test date. In order to be eligible to sit for the certification exam, applicants must:

- Be a licensed registered nurse in the United States
- Hold a bachelor’s degree in nursing or related field
- Have 1,000 hours of clinical school practice in the past three years

After applying and being accepted as eligible to sit for the national certification exam, applicants are notified and instructed to locate a convenient testing center and schedule an exam date and time. Confirmation of the test date and time are sent to the individual along with detailed instructions and an admission ticket to sit for the exam.

Test content includes questions on school nursing practice for grades prekindergarten through grade 12. Preparation is recommended prior to sitting for the exam; the following content areas are covered in the test: health appraisal, health problems and nursing management, health promotion/disease prevention, special health issues, and professional issues.

Preparation resources are available on the NASN and NBCSN websites, including Handbook for Candidates and School Nursing Certification Review. Both resources include practice test questions with correct answers.

Relevant clinical practice is excellent preparation for the exam, but many individuals find it helpful to review other content areas to be tested. Consider reviewing school nursing content that is not included in personal experience, such as specific medical conditions or grade levels.

Secondary school nurses may find it helpful to review situations more common in elementary grades and vice versa. School Nursing: A Comprehensive Text by Jane Selekman is available from the NASN bookstore and is a good reference for evidence-based practice.

Prepare prior to the test date by finding the testing site and becoming familiar with test site requirements. Testing sites are secure, so applicants will likely need two forms of identification, a test admission ticket, and no personal items in the testing area. Test takers need to plan on securing everything except car keys, identification, and the test admission ticket. Some, but not all, testing sites provide lockers.

Four hours is allotted to complete...
“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, April 14, 2015. 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.

Diabetes legislation will probably (once again) be at the top of our priorities.

If you are planning to attend this event, please RSVP to Nancy Kaminski, legislative chair, at kaminski.nj@gmail.com by April 1. Final details, including talking points about current legislation and school health concerns will be provided early in April to those who have RSVP’d.

Capitol Building Harrisburg, PA

GET READY...GET SET…IT’S CONFERENCE TIME!

PASNAP 2015
* School Nurses*
*Helping Students Balance Wellness*

By Judy Morgitan, M.Ed., BSN, RN,CSN, Conference Chair

Our 2015 PASNAP Conference brochure has been posted on the PASNAP website and Conference registration is waiting for you! Payment for the conference this year may be done by check or credit card. Although a small increase in the conference cost became a necessity this year, we believe our conference offers an excellent educational opportunity Pre-conference will include a session on Medical Emergencies at School by Dr. Robert Olympia, Penn State College of Medicine, and two separate sessions by Corporal Scott Davis, PA State Police, on Drug Trends and on Safety Assessment. Our featured keynote speaker is Dr. Katherine Dahlsgaard from Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. As a PASNAP Conference presenter for the past several years who has received excellent evaluations from attendees, Dr. Dahlsgaard will present on the topic of sleep and exercise and its impact on today’s youth. Sally Schoessler, NASN Director of Education, will provide us with an educational session on Individual Health Care Plans, how to develop and improve upon them. Our attendees will also be provided with our Legislative Update session from PASNAP lobbyist, Morgan Plant and Department of Health/School Health Update by Beth Anne Bahn. Our 2014 Research award recipient will also share her research results. Two sessions of breakouts include a variety of topics to reflect our theme “Helping Students Balance Wellness” focusing on the physical, emotional, and social health issues of students. Check out session offerings in the conference brochure posted on our website. As always, Act 48 credits and AANP CE credits will be awarded.

With school budget cuts, some nurse colleagues have applied and received grants from their local Community Health Foundations to cover costs. Please take this opportunity to attend this educational event and network with your colleagues across the state.

Go to www.pasnap.org and REGISTER TODAY!
2015 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 2016 PASNAP Conference in State College.

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 3/27/15.

PASNAP’s Annual Poster Presentation March 27-29, 2015

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, and gift baskets of all types. Items for auction will be on display and tickets will be sold during meal breaks beginning at breakfast on the 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. 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.
Consider Certification

Certification, continued from page 9

the 250 test questions in a computerized, multiple choice format. Upon completion of the test, scores are mailed to national certification candidates a few weeks after the dates of the test window close. Successful candidates are mailed a letter, certificate, pin, and the right to use the designation of National Certified School Nurse (NCSN). Certification is valid for five years, at which time the certification can be renewed, either by taking the exam again or submitting proof of continuing education and recertification requirements.

National certification recognizes excellence, professionalism, and rigor in school nursing practice. Consider adding NCSN to your credentials.

Websites:
- NBCSN: www.nbcsn.org

See Examination tab (left side of page)
- NASN: www.nasn.org Role and Career tab (top of page), choose School Nurse Certification
- PDE : www.education.state.pa.us Teachers, Administrators, and Certifications tab (left side of page) /Certification Programs /Approved Certification Programs

Step One: Plan Ahead!

Mark your calendars to attend NASN2015! June will be here before you know it and school nurses will be gathering for the NASN 47th Annual Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Start planning by "selling" the conference to your administrator. The Attendance Justification Toolkit is just what you need to convince your administrator that the NASN Annual Conference is beneficial to you AND your school community.

February 2, 2015 Registration and Room Block open
February 5, 2015 Poster Presentation abstract submission deadline
Conference announcements, including registration information, will be released soon.
Information can be found online at http://www.nasn.org/NASN2015.
Questions? Contact NASN at conference@nasn.org
See you soon in Philly!

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Exam brings trouble for school nurse

A visual check of a student was deemed an "unreasonable search" under the Fourth Amendment.

By Ann W. Latner, JD

Originally published in the October 2014 Issue of Clinical Advisor
Reprinted with permission from Haymarket Media

Ms. T, aged 48 years, was the nurse at a public elementary school. She'd been at this particular school for the past 6 years and at another school for 5 years before that. The job was fairly uneventful and mainly involved patching up skinned knees, making sure that kids weren't being sent to school with the flu, and assessing minor ailments.

In the 6 years that Ms. T had been at this school, there had been only one real emergency, a broken leg. Ms. T never imagined that she would end up being sued over an alleged violation of the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable searches.

The incident began on a Tuesday, when J, a 6-year old student, complained of irritation in her genital area and said it "burned" during urination. The complaint was reported to the school's secretary, Ms. P, who called J's mother and left a message regarding the girl's complaint. The mother called back that afternoon and informed the school that J had a history of chronic bladder infections.

In the meantime, Ms. P called the girl's mother again and left a message. When Ms. T arrived at the school, she was informed of J's complaints, including that the girl had pain while urinating, had trouble sitting, and was "walking funny."

Ms. T spoke reassuringly to the little girl and told her that they would need to take a look to see what the trouble was. The nurse, accompanied by the school secretary, took the child to a private bathroom used only by teachers.

Ms. T asked J to pull down her pants and underwear, and performed a visual check for red or irritated areas along the legs and inner thighs that could be causing discomfort. Seeing nothing unusual, Ms. T asked the child to spread her labia in order to visually check for redness. Nothing was readily apparent, so Ms. T asked J to dress again, wrote a note to the girl's parents, and continued working as usual.

Several weeks later, Ms. T was stunned to be notified that she was being sued by J's mother, who was alleging that the medical examination violated the girl's Fourth Amendment right to be free from unreasonable searches.

national and state nursing guidelines restrict medical examination of students and prohibit a genital examination of a student in the absence of parental consent or a medical emergency.

Ms. T immediately consulted with an attorney, who told her that he would try to get the case dismissed on the basis of qualified immunity: Qualified immunity, the attorney explained, protects government officials from liability in certain situations.

A government official (which applies to a school nurse working for a public school) will only be liable for a violation of a constitutional right if the facts are so clear that a reasonable official would understand that what is being done violates the right.

See Exam, page 14
Exam brings trouble for school nurse

The attorney acknowledged that this was an unusual case. "There have been cases dealing with searching children in school, but they generally apply to looking for weapons or illegal drugs. This is unusual because it was a medical exam. Were you given guidelines when you started your job?"

Ms. T responded that she had not been given guidelines, specific training, or specific instruction.

The attorney filed a motion to dismiss, but the motion was denied by a district court, which held that "Ordinary common sense puts school administrators on notice that a search of a student's naked body grossly offends the student's sense of decency, self-respect, and bodily privacy."

Ms. T was crushed, but an appeals court held that she was, in fact, entitled to qualified immunity because she did not have fair warning that her medical assessments were subject to the Fourth Amendment protections.

Legal background

This was an interesting and complex case. As Ms. T's attorney pointed out, there have been numerous Fourth Amendment cases involving school, but the bulk had to do with searches for law-enforcement purposes, not for medical treatment.

The appeals court stated that the school and the school district were really at fault here. Nursing guidelines did exist, but they had never been explained nor distributed to nurses in the school district. Therefore, the school nurses did not know what their restrictions were.

Had Ms. T been informed when she began work at the school that absent an emergency or clear parental consent, a genital examination is prohibited, she would merely have notified the child's mother. Ms. T, without any other guidance, believed that a visual examination was not harmful to the child and might clarify the cause of the child's discomfort. In order for Ms. T to have been liable in this case, she would have had to know what her restrictions were, and would have had to violate them knowingly.

Protecting yourself

Because Ms. T was given no guidelines or information when she started her job, she could not have protected herself. However, guidelines did exist, and those guidelines restricted medical examinations of students, and specifically prohibited genital examinations absent parental consent or a medical emergency, neither of which existed in this case.

Whether you are a school nurse or you practice in an office, clinic, or hospital, most places of employment do have guidelines, and you should make sure you know what they are. In most cases, being unaware of guidelines is no protection.

This case was different because of the qualified-immunity protection that is offered to those working for the government. However, Ms. T would not have been protected from the lawsuit had the school adequately explained the procedures to her. Ironically, in effect it was the school's failure that protected Ms. T from liability in this case.

Prepared continued from page 2

Below are some resources that, we, at the Pocono Mountain School District have for our students and their families:

- □ Student Assistance Program (SAP)
- □ PMSD (district) Crisis Team
- □ Parent Link phone system to alert families of closings/delays, etc.
- □ School based Resource Officer
- □ Red Cross
- □ Mental Health Crisis Hotline (Monroe, Pike & Carbon Counties)

You may have others.

Be proactive…add this list to your toolkit for emergency preparedness.
Did they REALLY just say that?

A School Nurse

I approach the red brick building,
Wondering what will I see
When I walk into the office
Who will be greeting me?

Today it’s a parent
Medicine the mom does hold
You see it’s for little Joey
He has a very bad cold.

Holding his tiny belly
Tommy’s coming up the hall
I ask why he came to school
He said “mom wanted to go to the mall.”

Sally comes from recess
With a cut on her arm
I just applied a Band-Aid
There’s no reason for alarm.

Following right behind

Is Nancy holding her knee
She has tears in her big brown eyes
Because she was bit by a bee.

Lunch is fast approaching
Daily meds are ready to dispense
The kids must take their Ritalin
Or they’ll have to stand at the fence.

I sit down to do paperwork
When suddenly I feel a tug
It’s just little Larry
He only needs a hug.

Jimmy comes to my office
He has a big black eye
I ask him what had happened
His mom’s boyfriend was the guy.

Jenny comes in running
Her face is bright beet red
She is overheated
And wants to lie on a bed.

Mrs. Smith sends up Lillie
Timid as can be
I finally figure it out
She must have had to pee.

In comes Tim with a can
I know just what is wrong
He threw up in music class
As he sang a patriotic song.

The end of a busy day
Is quickly drawing near
I’ll go home, prop up my feet
And pop a nice cold root beer!

At bedtime I will thank God
For keeping us in his care
And, tomorrow I will return to school
I wonder what I will find there.

By Bonnie Shetter, author

Submitted by Melissa Bechtel