NASN Announces Champions for School Health Project in Partnership With IEL

Efforts will activate, grow, and sustain healthy systems that support the total wellbeing of children today and in the future

Silver Spring, MD, February 28, 2022—The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) is proud to announce the Champions for School Health project to increase confidence in and access to pediatric COVID-19 vaccinations. Created in partnership with the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) and with the financial support of Kaiser Permanente, the project will address both the immediate and long-term goals and outcomes of:

• increasing COVID-19 pediatric vaccinations,
• increasing confidence in COVID-19 pediatric vaccines,
• creating sustainable school and community partnerships, and
• increasing health equity for under-resourced communities.

NASN and IEL understand the seriousness of how COVID-19 has exacerbated the threat to our children’s total well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown light on health inequities in our nation. The impact of COVID-19 on health inequities will not be just in terms of virus-related infection, but also the total physical and mental health of our children. Public schools cannot meet this opportunity and create these conditions for the total well-being of children alone, but experience shows that results-based partnerships can.

Through this project, NASN will develop a series of resources to address common barriers to offering school located vaccine clinics and community access to COVID-19 vaccines and develop microbursts of learning to assist school nurses in facilitating one-on-one conversations regarding vaccine confidence. Preparing for this kind of ongoing, high-touch outreach can be a vital part of the vaccination effort, as a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll showed parents of 5–11-year-olds who said their school encouraged them to get their child vaccinated were four times as likely to get their younger child the COVID-19 vaccine than those who said their school did not encourage vaccination.

The project will include grant funding through two vehicles: $1 million in implementation grants administered through NASN, and $1 million in challenge grant funding administered through IEL. While funding opportunities will be focused on Kaiser Permanente’s footprint, the lessons learned and resulting materials will be applicable across the nation.

“Vaccines represent the primary mitigation strategy against COVID-19,” said Donna Mazyck, MS, RN, NCSN, CAE, FNASN, executive director of NASN, “and shared leadership is critical to ensuring that communities facing barriers have access to the pediatric vaccine and have the information they need to feel confident in the safety and efficacy of these vaccines. NASN is excited about the opportunity this project has to improve the health and well-being of our school communities and to address some of the health inequities exposed by the current pandemic.”
“IEL has a history of catalyzing community-driven systems-level leadership,” said Jose Munoz, director of IEL’s Coalition for Community Schools. “This effort offers a much-needed opportunity to address the short-term goals of increasing pediatric vaccine access and uptake, while sowing the seeds for long-term, sustainable school and community partnerships that Community Schools drive, to address health inequity.”

Information regarding funding vehicles will be released in March.

About NASN
The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) is a nonprofit specialty nursing organization, organized in 1968 and incorporated in 1977, representing school nurses exclusively. NASN has close to 18,000 members and 50 affiliates, including the District of Columbia and overseas. The mission of NASN is to optimize student health and learning by advancing the practice of school nursing. To learn more about NASN, please visit us on the Web at www.nasn.org or call 866-627-6767.

About IEL
IEL supports and builds the capacity of community leaders, cultivating networks of grassroots movement builders that are advocating for transformation within the education, workforce, and accessibility systems to advance racial healing and justice, disability inclusion, and economic equity in over 400 communities. To do so, we partner with under-resourced communities to equip leaders to better prepare children, youth, adults, and families for postsecondary education and training, rewarding careers, and civic and community engagement.

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