
January 2024

Nurses for Under-Resourced Schools Everywhere (NURSE) Act

ACTION

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) urges Congress to pass the Nurses for Under-Resourced Schools Everywhere Act (NURSE) Act, which would recognize the critical role of school nurses in providing students access to quality health care so that they are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. The Nurses for Under-Resourced Schools Everywhere Act (NURSE) Act was introduced by Representative Dina Titus (D-NV), HR 3197.

HISTORY

- National data indicates 65.7 percent of schools have access to a full time school nurse [up from 39 percent as a result of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER funds)]. School nursing services inequities exist from state to state, within states and school districts, and between urban and rural schools.
- In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau reported 5.6 percent of children under 19 (4.3 million) were uninsured. For many of our nation's children, the school nurse is the sole healthcare provider in an educational setting and enables access to health care. This makes the role of school nurses even more critical.
- Health care happens in schools. School nursing services support student physical health, mental wellness, safety, and availability for learning.

BACKGROUND

- NASN supports a demonstration grant program to fund school nurses based on Title I designation (free and reduced lunch and breakfast) through the Department of Education.
- Five year grant with a 75/25 Federal to State/Local cost share.
- Poverty is frequently an indicator of unmet health needs. All students should be able to have their health needs safely met while in the school setting.
- The current reality is that students have greater healthcare needs than in past generations. Children cannot meet their full potential with unmet health needs.
- Today's students face more medically complex conditions and chronic health illnesses – including asthma, diabetes, food allergies, obesity, and mental health and behavioral issues – which require the knowledge, assessment skills, and judgment of a school nurse to provide management of these lifelong conditions.
- School nurses coordinate with families, schools, and providers to connect children to medical/health homes, which can help improve health outcomes and reduce costs.