School Health Issues Info: Scoliosis- A brief overview

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) through the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 37 was authorized by the Texas Legislature to establish a spinal screening program in the public-school system as well as private schools.

Spinal screenings are performed by nurses and other trained individuals that have gone through DSHS’s certification program. The goal of the program teaches the attendee how to establish a screening program, what is required to be come a spinal screener, the who and when to screen, what physical signs might warrant a spine problem, how to prepare for the actual screening, and how to record results and refer.

Do you know the screening schedule?

Girls will be screened twice, once at age 10 (OR fall semester of grade 5) and then again at age 12 (OR fall semester of grade 7).

Boys are screened one time at age 13 or age 14 (OR fall semester of grade 8).

It is expected for schools to catch those students that are promoted to higher grades and are at the age to be screened or those students that are held back.

Do you know who can conduct the screening?

Any licensed health profession may conduct spinal screening WITHOUT prior certification if their course of study included physical assessment. This includes: Physicians, Physician Assistants, Chiropractors, Physical Therapists, Nurse Practitioners, and Registered Nurses.

Those that need be certified are those that are not mentioned above. Everyone else has to be trained and certified according to the program rules. A spinal screener must 1) have at least a high school degree or GED 2) must be trained directly by a DSHS instructor and 3) have passed the certification test. A certification is valid for 5 years.

Did you know that DSHS occasionally identifies the need for additional instructors? To be a qualified instructor an individual has have a current valid department screening certificate and experience in conducting screenings, have experience training adults, and lastly, be a Physician, Physician Assistant, Chiropractor, Physical therapist, Nurse Practitioner, or Registered Nurse.

For more information regarding scoliosis, and how to conduct a screening in your school please go to this website: https://dshs.texas.gov/spinal/spinalguide.shtm. This guide will assist you in your implementation of this screening. A link is also provided in the resources tab at https://www.txsno.org/home.