

## **Certified School Nurses: What's the Message?**

**October 24, 2011**

Attendees at the *Discover the Leader in You* workshop were asked to craft a 30-60 second elevator speech explaining the benefits of hiring a certified school nurse. Each speech targets a different audience.

### **Message for Parents of High School Students**

A certified school nurse is a highly-qualified registered nurse who has been specifically educated to understand how physical and emotional wellness translates into academic success. The CSN understands and creates plans to address the special needs of high school students and communicates with school staff to ensure student health and safety care professionals. While registered nurses are trained to treat only a presenting problem, certified school nurses are specifically prepared to see how a condition affects the educational process

### **Message for Parents of K-8 Students**

You need a certified school nurse to advocate for your child's health needs in your school. As CSNs, we have the knowledge to navigate the educational system with minimal disruption to classroom learning and socialization. CSN's are similar to the "key" used by emergency personnel to access an elevator quickly—we are there to provide care for your child when he/she needs it.

### **Message to School Board Members**

Certified school nurses are where nursing and education meet. The advanced education required to become certified blends the professions of nursing and education and ensures that CSNs are highly qualified to suggest and make accommodations to the learning process based on the child's health and learning needs. As a nursing specialty, CSNs are trained to educate school personnel to understand student health concerns and help make the school environment more medically-friendly. Certified school nurses keep students in school and learning.

### **Message to District and School Administrators**

The certified school nurse is a specialist in health and education. Students, parents and teachers rely on CSNs to coordinate and manage student health care and meet the needs of all students. Certified school nurses bring expertise, relevance, and integrity to the school setting and can serve as a resource to administrators to meet the health and learning needs of all students.

### **Message to School Faculty and Staff**

As a CSN, I understand classroom management and the educational needs of students. I know that students must be present in the classroom at their maximum health in order for them to learn. As CSNs, we take education courses and complete rigorous field experiences and student teaching in the K-12 setting. We are also required to engage in professional development for both our education "license" and our nursing license. We provide you with information on health issues that may impact a student's ability to learn.

## **Message to State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education**

Certified school nurses specialize in meeting the health needs of students in an academic setting. CSNs complete specialized courses in education and engage in practical field-based experiences in schools. We have a unique perspective that enables us to address the needs of the whole child and how to enhance each child's ability to learn. CSNs maintain a high degree of professionalism during the student's educational experience. We are an invaluable resource in the school community as we are often the only health care professional in the building and may be the first or only health care provider a student sees.

## **Message to Community Health Agencies and Healthcare Providers**

Certified school nurses are specifically credentialed to address the needs of the school age population and their families. School nursing has a recognized body of knowledge as a nursing specialty. CSNs are community collaborators—they help families find and access resources. Certified school nurses are prepared to serve as a solitary health and safety practitioner; unlike acute or long-term care settings, certified school nurses often work alone with limited or no access to other nurses or physicians. CSNs are trained to save children's lives and to respond appropriately in a non-healthcare environment. Certified school nurses are educated to use evidence-based practice and research to support their work and to guide the assessment of student health needs. CSNs promote school and community health and serve as valuable resources to school administrators to help ensure compliance with education and public health mandates and laws such as immunizations and communicable disease prevention. CSNs have even become experts in disaster preparedness. What are we worth? We are worth the life of a child!

## **Message to Parents of Students with Special Needs**

Hello, I am Ms. Certified School Nurse and I am here for you and your child to make this a successful school year. As a CSN, I am knowledgeable about the health barriers and challenges that your child may encounter and I can help them navigate those educational experiences. Please feel free to contact me as I am here full-time in your child's school...here is my card.

## **Message to Students**

Why do you need a certified school nurse in your school? Well, I took college courses in education so I know how you learn and those courses help me to work better with your teachers and counselors. As a certified school nurse, I have learned how to teach you to take better care of yourself and if you are healthy, you will be better able to learn.

## **Message to Governor Christie and the New Jersey Legislature**

Certified school nurses are specialized, multifaceted professionals that provide cost effective care to students in New Jersey's schools. CSNs specialize in the care of students in the school setting, much the way that other nurses specialize in cardiac or obstetrical nursing. CSNs provide multifaceted care as experts in both health and education. We collaborate with other professionals in both health and education to ensure that educational goals are met for every student. Yes, we are cost effective—we support educators by providing triage and emergency care and by educating and counseling students and referring them to appropriate school and community health resources.