



VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL NURSES

COMPASS

Uniting all VA nurses - North, South, East and West

March, 2025 - Volume 2, Issue 1



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings Virginia School Nurses!

As I noted in my February letter, VASN has been heavily involved in legislative matters during the 2025 General Assembly session. Thank you to Gina Bellamy for all her help as we met with legislators regarding several bills that affected school nurses. We wanted to ensure our voices were heard and much of this legislation has passed. Further in this newsletter, you can see details of all the legislation that was completed. Thank you to the legislators who listened and supported school nurses while also prioritizing the health and well-being of students in Virginia.

We are thrilled to announce the 2025 VASN Fall conference will once again be held at the Hilton Oceanfront in Virginia Beach. If you attended last year's conference, you experienced Jeep Week and hundreds of decorated Jeeps driving a sandy obstacle course! Plan on joining a repeat weekend this year, having fun watching the Jeeps all lit up for the holidays along the beach. We will send out registration information in May but block that weekend now.

I was honored to be invited to host three webinars on behalf of VASN for the Virginia School Board. The webinars are hosted in partnership with VDH and VDOE, with coordination for VASN by Nakeisha White and Joanna Pitts. Dr. John Phillips, Pediatric Cardiologist, VCU was our first guest speaker who spoke on the cardiac emergency plans webinar. The March webinar will focus on mental health. The third and final webinar in April will cover

allergies and asthma. Webinar links will be sent to all VASN members ahead of the events as these webinars are open to school nurses.

Please consider attending NASN this summer in Austin, TX. Attending a national conference is a great experience and this year, Virginia nurses will be presenting two different educational sessions. I am so excited about these amazing opportunities to showcase Virginia School Nurses! Please fill out this Google form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfUX-rKJooGXkcUMnE9Txbk-yF3GCMVbsp0bBCyNNt4KHwiyw/viewform> if you're planning to attend so we can set up a group email. Per custom, there will be a VASN affiliate dinner and we will be taking preorders for T-shirts for Affiliate Day. T-shirts will be distributed in Austin at a designated location (details to follow).

It is an honor to serve as your President. I am so fortunate to have such a wonderful board and committee members. Thank you to all who have dedicated your time and expertise. We could not do what we do without your support. Please let me know if I can assist you in any way.

Warm regards,

Betsy Looney BS, BSN, RN, NCSN

VASN President
betsylooneyvasn@gmail.com

Wellness Update

As 2025 is now well underway, school nurses are busy with many things. Please don't forget to prioritize your own health, and encourage your colleagues to do likewise. We all know it is important to incorporate daily wellness strategies into our lives but a sometimes overlooked part of wellness is vigilance on any creeping medical concerns that may need evaluation. We had a timely reminder of this at the 38th Annual Fall Conference for the Virginia Association of School Nurses, when Susan Fuhs presented to nearly 100 school nurses on ovarian cancer awareness and the importance of early detection. The conference theme, *Navigating Wellness*, provided the perfect backdrop for a talk emphasizing the need for nurses to prioritize their own health—a responsibility often overshadowed by the demands of caregiving. Nurses, who are accustomed to putting others' needs first, frequently downplay or overlook their own health concerns. However, subtle health changes—particularly those related to ovarian cancer—are critical to recognize early, as they can significantly impact diagnosis and outcomes. As a local facilitator for the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance's Survivors Teaching Students (STS) program, Fuhs has honed her ability to educate others on the risks and symptoms of ovarian cancer. Through the STS program, Fuhs works with survivors and caregivers to lead presentations at Eastern Virginia Medical School, teaching third-year medical students to identify subtle symptoms and emphasize the importance of early intervention. This experience has deepened Fuhs' understanding of how crucial it is for healthcare providers—especially those in caregiving roles like nurses—to be vigilant about their own health, as early detection can significantly improve survival rates. The session received positive feedback, with several attendees approaching Fuhs afterward to share personal stories about how ovarian cancer had affected their lives. Many expressed gratitude for the presentation, noting that the session served as a valuable reminder for women, particularly those in caregiving professions, to prioritize their own wellness.

SAVE THE DATE for the 2025 VASN CONFERENCE

Charting the Course

**39th Annual
Virginia Association of School Nurses
Conference**

November 8-9, 2025

**Hilton Oceanfront
Virginia Beach**

**Navigating the Future of School Nursing:
Advocacy, Innovation, and Wellness**

**Together, we
navigate
challenges and
steer towards a
healthier
tomorrow**



Contact Us



www.vasn.us

**Virginia Association
of School Nurses**



Poster Presentation submissions for the 2025 Fall VASN Conference are now being accepted.
Please send all questions or requests for additional information to Jessica Brown at brownjes@ameliaschools.com or Tammy Moody at moodyrn75@gmail.com by April 15, 2025.

VASN LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Andrew Lamar, the VASN legislative lobbyist, submitted the Sine Die (Adjournment) Report from the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond Va on February 28th, 2025.

The Virginia General Assembly adjourned its 45-day legislative session on the evening of February 22, 2025. Over the course of the session, the members in the Democratic-controlled House and Senate introduced a total of 1,994 bills—1,236 in the House and 758 in the Senate. Of these, 917 bills passed both chambers and will be sent to the Governor for action. Governor Youngkin has until March 24 to sign, recommend amendments, or veto these bills.

2024 Special Session I: Although the 2025 session officially ended on February 22, the General Assembly immediately reconvened for the 2024 Special Session I, taking up an expanded resolution to allow for consideration of bills addressing the impact of federal budget changes on Virginia. As a result, the Special Session remains active, and the General Assembly may be called back into session as needed.

Below is a list of relevant bills and budget items that passed this year. Unless amended or vetoed by the Governor, all legislation should be effective on July 1, 2025. Click [here](#) to see the latest on the full list of bills we are tracking this session.

Legislative Updates

SB799 Senator Favola: Extends from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2028, the sunset date for the School Health Services Committee.

SB1303 Senator McPike: The bill requires the school health services committee to do a comprehensive review of the diabetes management plan and examine aspects of Senator McPike's original bill that sought to make several modifications relating to the provision of medical care and management for students diagnosed as having diabetes in public schools. The report from the committee is required to be submitted by November 1, 2025.

SB 817 Senator Rouse/HB1675 Delegate Askew: The bill requires all public elementary and secondary schools to develop a cardiac emergency response plan that addresses the use of school personnel to respond to cardiac events on school grounds and, if applicable, at school athletic events. The Department of Education will establish a grant program to assist schools in developing and implementing these plans. *This was a recommendation of the School Health Services Committee and supported by VASN.*

HB2104 Delegate Elizabeth Bennett-Parker: Allows trained employees of schools to administer seizure rescue medications to students with parental consent and a prescriber's order. Protects employees from civil liability for ordinary negligence. Also permits school boards to allow secondary students with seizures to carry their medication with a submitted management plan. *VASN worked to ensure this legislation only applied to secondary schools, that is applied to all forms of seizure medications, and that the school nurse must be notified when the student is carrying their medicine.*

SB1049 Senator Pekarsky: Requires each local school board to develop and implement a policy to require the annual notification of the parent of each student enrolled in the local school division, to be sent by email and, if applicable, SMS text message within 30 calendar days succeeding the first day of each school year, of (i) the importance of securely storing any prescription drug, as defined in relevant law, present in the household and (ii) the parent's legal responsibility to safely store any firearm present in the household.

SB738 Senator Pekarsky: This bill requires each school board shall develop and each public elementary and secondary school shall implement age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate policies relating to student cell phone and smart device possession and use on school property during regular school hours.

SB1320 Senator Bagby: This bill stipulates that local school divisions must require the completion of the Preparticipation Physical Evaluation form in order to participate on or try out for any interscholastic team or squad.

HB1641 Delegate Patrick Hope: Directs the Board of Medical Assistance Services to amend the state plan to cover medical assistance for PANDAS/PANS, including antimicrobials, medications, behavioral therapies, immunomodulating treatments, plasma exchange, and IV immunoglobulin therapy.

HB1861 Delegate Marcia Price: Directs each health regulatory board regulated by the Department of Health Professions to enact regulations to provide a licensure by endorsement pathway for qualified applicants as practitioners of the particular profession or professions regulated by such board.

SB768 Senator Favola/HB1947 Delegate Holly Seibold: Requires the Department of Education (the Department) to survey each local education agency (LEA) in the Commonwealth to determine (i) how public schools governed by such LEA currently grant access to local departments of social services and community services boards and other community-based providers of mental and behavioral health services and (ii) what school-based mental and behavioral health services are made available by such LEA.

SB968 Senator Carroll Foy/HB1983 Delegate Alex Askew: Requires (i) each school board to, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, annually collect and submit to the Department of Education a report on data on the average salaries of support services personnel, as that term is defined in the bill, employed by the school board and (ii) the Department to, beginning with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

SB1104 Senator Ghazala Hashmi/HB1663 Delegate Mike Jones: Requires the Board of Education to develop and distribute to each local school division guidelines on policies and procedures to inform and educate coaches, student-athletes, and the parents of student-athletes about the nature and risk of heat illness and requires each school board to develop and establish policies and procedures regarding the prevention and management of heat illness in student-athletes.

HB1910 Delegate Hilary Pugh Kent: Prohibits any public elementary or secondary school from offering or making available to any student any food served as a part of a school meal or any competitive food, as defined in applicable law, that contains any of the seven color additives listed in the bill.

SB1293 Senator Bill Stanley: Directs the Board of Education to provide guidance on and each school board to provide each year an optional program of high-quality professional development for instructional personnel and school board employees whose duties include regular contact with students on communicating with and supporting students with autism spectrum disorder.

SB1037 Senator Pekarsky and HB1945 Delegate Atoosa Reaser: Directs each school board to consider, for the purpose of increasing access to health care services for students, developing and implementing policies for permitting any public school student in the school division to schedule and participate in telehealth services on school property during regular school hours with parental consent.

SB953/HB2548 Senator Favola and Delegate Rasoul: The bill requires a common curriculum for practical nursing programs to align with associate-degree registered nursing programs and be transferable across public institutions. It mandates associate-degree institutions to participate in transfer agreements and allows baccalaureate and private institutions to opt in.

HB1700 Delegate Nadarius Clark: Requires school boards to implement a bleeding control program in all public schools, including accessible bleeding control kits and staff training. Employees using the kits are protected from civil liability for ordinary negligence.

Relevant Budget Items ([Final Budget Conference Report](#)):

271 #2s -This scholarship would help school-employed Licensed Practical Nurses to become RNs and keep working as a school nurse who would then be able to provide a higher level of care and treatment after receiving additional training and education (see more information in School Nurse Education Opportunities).

469 #1c -This amendment provides \$83.1 million the first year from the general fund to provide a 1.5 percent bonus to state employees and state-supported local employees on June 16, 2025.

271 #3c -This amendment directs the Virginia Department of Health to expand the Mary Marshall Scholarship Program to increase the number of nurses coming into the profession to address significant shortages, including allowing humanitarian parolees (foreign nationals who are allowed to enter the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons) as eligible participants and paying the fees for Virginians with a nursing degree from an international educational institution to be credentialed in order to practice.



SCHOOL NURSE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

A budget amendment concerning School Nurse Scholarships for LPNs to continue their education to become RNs was passed during the Virginia General Assembly that ended on February 22, 2025. This amendment allows \$300,000 GF (General Fund) each year of existing nursing scholarship funds to be used for school nurse scholarships to address the lack of access to Registered Nurses (RNs) in schools. Licensed Practical Nurses serving as a school nurse or school nurse assistant can become Registered Nurses through an approved education program in the Commonwealth of Virginia using scholarships of up to \$10,000 per year. For each year of scholarship funds received, the recipient must maintain employment as a school nurse and agree to engage in the equivalent of one year of full time employment as a school nurse after graduation:

[271#1c \(VDH\) School Nurse Scholarships for LPNs to RNs. HB1600 - Conference Report](#)

There are many ongoing education offerings available via the NASN website:

Be sure to check the NASN continuing education offerings on a regular basis. There have been multiple new courses added to the catalogue, including wellness topics for student care:

School Nurse experience of secondary exposure to trauma (1.0NCPD)

Increasing Health and Educational Equity for Keiki in Schools (1.0NCPD)

Sleep- the untapped tool to optimize health, mental wellness, decision making and academic success (1.0NCPD)

ACT: Utilizing the Ask-Counsel-Treat (ACT) model for Youth Tobacco Cessation in school based settings (1.25NCPD)

NCSN:

SPECIAL NOTE: In coordination with the 2025 Fall nursing conference, VASN is happy to announce that Janice Selekman, DNSc, RN, NCSN, FNASN, will be hosting a NCSN exam review free of charge to VASN members on Friday, November 7, 2025 (the day before the VASN Fall conference). Details: 12:00pm-8:00pm

As noted on the NBCSN website, “Board certification in school nursing is a formal recognition of advanced knowledge, competence, and a personal commitment to excellence in the specialty practice of school nursing on behalf of the better health and education of school-age children.”

Try answering the “challenge the school nurse” question each month of the NCSN website:

<https://nbcnsn.org/challenge-the-school-nurse>

Please share this newsletter with any school nurses in Virginia who are not members of VASN (**and encourage them to join**). If there is a topic you would like featured or a “shout out” we can share, contact me at bmberset@gmail.com.

Bernadette Berset, MSN, RN, NCSN
VASN Newsletter Chair

Compass is the Virginia Association of School Nursing quarterly newsletter, sharing information to assist school nurses with excellence in their nursing practice. The Virginia Association of School Nurses (VASN) is a non-profit organization that advocates for professional school nursing in the Commonwealth of Virginia.