

Division of School Health

Quarterly Newsletter December 2025



Pennsylvania
Department of Health

As we close out the year, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to you. Your dedication, compassion, and expertise make a profound difference in the lives of students, families, and school communities every single day.

This season is a time to reflect on the care and comfort you provide – not only through health services, but also through the reassurance, kindness, and advocacy that helps students thrive. You are the calm presence in moments of uncertainty, the champions of wellness, and the bridge between health and education.

May this holiday season bring you rest, joy, and time with loved ones. Thank you for the countless ways you nurture well being and strengthen our schools.

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*As a reminder, if there are changes regarding new nursing staff, nurse retirements, etc., please notify your school nurse consultant of the changes so we may keep our distribution lists up to date.

FDA Safety Communication Anti-Choking Devices

On November 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) updated the Safety Communication which encourages the public to follow established choking rescue protocols during choking emergencies. The update includes information on actions the FDA took to address the marketing of unauthorized anti-choking devices, including issuing Warning Letters and an Important Alert.

Additional information may be found on the FDA website: [Safety Communication Encouraging the Public to Follow Established Choking Rescue Protocols](#)

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Department of Health Asthma Control Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Health's Asthma Control Program (ACP), in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Asthma Partnership, created three new information briefs:

- Asthma Medication Accessibility Brief
- Stock Inhaler Brief
- Stock Inhaler Brief for School Personnel

These briefs can be found on the [Asthma Resources](#) page of the Department of Health's website. These briefs are designed to provide key information, important considerations, and available resources. If you have any feedback on these briefs, have topic suggestions for future briefs, or would like to share how you have used these briefs, please reach out the ACP at RA-DHPAAsthma@pa.gov

Pennsylvania Alliance to Control Tobacco

The rise of youth vaping has become a significant issue in Pennsylvania, with an alarming 16% of high school students using e-cigarettes. The Vape-Free PA Schools program supports school personnel to facilitate change in school communities and earn money for health and wellness efforts — and we can't do it without you.

Support your students in living tobacco- and vape-free! Become a trained facilitator in [CATCH My Breath](#) prevention program, [INDEPTH](#) intervention program, and [Not On Tobacco](#) cessation program. Learn more about the American Lung Association's available funding and resources by emailing Annmarie.Brady@Lung.org.

Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Pennsylvania Chapter

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School nurses play a critical role in keeping students healthy, protected, and ready to learn, and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (PA AAP) is here to support that work. Together with the Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition (PAIC), PA AAP created a wide range of educational materials to help engage families and promote strong immunization practices in your school community.

To access vaccine factsheets, parent-friendly handouts, HPV resources, consequence cards, and multilingual materials that make communication easier and more effective, [click here](#).

PA AAP continues to lead and support statewide efforts to improve vaccine confidence, support evidence-based messaging, and ensure families have the information they need to make informed decisions. By sharing these trusted resources, you as school nurses help strengthen communities and keep Pennsylvania's children safe from vaccine-preventable diseases. Thank you for being a vital part of this public health mission. Let us know how PA AAP can continue supporting your immunization outreach by reaching out to us at info@paaap.org.

Division of School Health

Practice Spotlight - Health Room Staffing Roles

Our Division of School Health is often asked about the regulations and roles that guide health room staff. To make information easier to locate, we put together quick-reference tables outlining law, regulations, and key points.

Certified School Nurse (CSN) Overview

Section	Citation	Key Points
State Board of Nursing	49 Pa. Code Chapter 21, Subchapter A, §21.11	Defines general functions of Registered Nurses includes: The Board recognizes standards of practice and professional codes of behavior, as developed by appropriate nursing associations, as the criteria for assuring safe and effective practice.
School Health Regulations	28 Pa. Code Chapter 23, §23.34	Duties assigned by school district/joint school board which are exclusively connected with medical and dental school health activities; technical content prescribed by Dept. of Health.
Duties of School Nurses	28 Pa. Code Chapter 23, §§23.71–23.79	Assist in health program/exams; maintain records; advise pupils/teachers/parents; interpret health needs; provide info; plan for environmental needs; assist in budget prep; coordinate with community programs; provide first aid.
Certification Guidelines	CSPG 80 – School Nurse (rev. 3/1/2025)	Only RNs certified by Dept. of Ed as “Education Specialist” may use title CSN. If an RN has an emergency permit from the Dept. of Education they may function and perform the day-to-day duties of a CSN (carry a caseload, etc.) however, may not use the initials CSN.
Public School Code	1949 Act 14, Chapter 14, §1411 (amended 1963)	Defines “school nurse” as licensed RN certificated by Superintendent of Public Instruction; employed by district, joint school board, or contracted health unit.

Supplemental Staff Roles

Role	Citation	Functions	Supervision
Registered Nurse (RN)	49 Pa. Code Chapter 21, Subchapter A, §21.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet daily student needs; follow care plans; assist with mandated screens/exams; consult with CSN; function within RN scope. 	Works under CSN direction but under own license.
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	49 Pa. Code Chapter 21, Subchapter B, §21.145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the daily health needs of students, follow plans of care, assist with completion of mandated screens/exams, consult with CSN, and function within their scope of practice. Could be a substitute for another LPN. Could be a substitute for an RN <u>when the medical needs of the students can be met under an LPN license.</u> An LPN can NOT be a substitute for a CSN. 	Works under CSN direction but under own license.

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Role	Citation	Functions	Supervision
Agency Nurse (RN/LPN)	Division of School Health guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to agency personnel caring for students in schools, the Division of School Health recommends all appropriate school personnel, certified school nurses (CSNs), agency personnel, parents, and physician, develop a plan of care (504/IEP) that would include how care/treatment will be provided to students with agency nurses at all times while the student is under school jurisdiction. • Should report care/changes/refusals to CSN daily. Nurses are responsible for functioning within their scope and standards of practice. 	Agency nurses have their own orders; CSN should also maintain orders in case agency staff unavailable.
Unlicensed Assistive Personnel/Paraprofessional	CSPG 101 – Utilization of Paraprofessional Staff (rev. 3/21/25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be directed to engage in health-related activities reserved exclusively for certified school nurses. • Personal care assistants (special education)-provide one-to-one support and assistance to a student, including support and assistance in use of medical equipment (e.g. augmentative communication devices; activities of daily living; and monitoring health and behavior). 	Works under direction of certificated staff member

Winter Season Health Resources

With cold and flu season upon us, below are several resources you may find useful in your daily practice:

[Preventing Respiratory Viruses \(and other illnesses\) in K-12 Schools](#)

[Hand Foot and Mouth Disease Fact Sheet](#)

[CDC Clean Hands – Health Promotion Materials](#)

[CDC Hand Hygiene in Schools and Early Childcare Settings](#)

Continuing Education Opportunities

- PASNAP Conference March 20 – 22, 2026
- [Pennsylvania Immunization Conference](#) June 18, 2026
- [TRAIN PA](#)