

Hot Topics!

Lice!

The implementation of a new lice procedure this year, bringing us closer to compliance with CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, was received with resistance by some and relief by others. The nurses put a lot of effort into educating parents, stressing the need to check their children regularly, simply because lice is always out in the community. We emphasized that “every Monday, your child walks into a lice-free school.” The results have been fewer missed school days by students and fewer days of missed work and loss of income for families. Education will be on-going. We are happy to report that so far there hasn’t been any increase in incidences of lice in our school district.

Health Services

Annual Report 2017-2018

"You can't educate a child who isn't healthy and you can't keep a child healthy who isn't educated." Dr. M. Joycelyn Elders, former Surgeon General



KPBSD Nurses at the March 2018 Inservice

In the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District there are 44 schools with 8,958 students. To serve their health needs, we have 30 Registered Nurses, one Nursing Supervisor and one Administrative Assistant. Several nurses have more than one school assignment with three of those nurses providing coverage for four or more schools. Their education and expertise prove vital as they assess health needs and broach sensitive issues in a district like ours, with many culturally diverse communities.

Hot topics!

Narcan!

What started out as an occasional event last year, is now on the news several times a week: the opioid epidemic and Narcan. Last October, Andy Jones, from the Alaska Department of Substance Misuse and Prevention, came to our nursing inservice and trained us in Narcan use and opioid overdose assessment. He also provided us with enough Narcan for each school to have four doses. In November, he came back and trained the administrators. By the end of November, every school in the district was stocked with Narcan and prepared to save the life of some student or their relative in an opioid overdose event. I am SO proud to be part of an organization whose leaders have foresight and vision AND act on it!

Bloodborne Pathogen Training

In the past, staff who have jobs that put them at high risk for bloodborne pathogen exposure have been reluctant to take time away from their work, find and prepare for a sub, and travel to the Health Services office to participate in the Initial Bloodborne Pathogen Training. This year we have removed those barriers by providing the training on-line. The format and information are basically the same and the trainee still has the opportunity to ask questions. Once the required paperwork has been returned to the Health Services office, the Nursing Supervisor follows up with an email answering any questions and asking the participant to find their nearest BBP manual and report back.

There has been a sharp uptick in the number of Initial BBP trainings this year. From 57 trainings in 2015-2016, and 69 trainings in 2016-2017, this year we provided 101 trainings. In addition, our nurses administered 41 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine to staff members, further ensuring their safety and protection.

There is still room for improvement. Some candidates for the training were not identified until near the end of the school year. Next fall, the nurses will work with the school secretaries to identify and refer candidates at the beginning of the school year.

We also worked with the Borough to overhaul and update the Bloodborne Pathogen manual. It should be posted soon. Be sure to check it out!

“I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results.”—Florence Nightingale

Hot Topics!

New Consulting Physician!



Dr. Rachel Walden has kindly agreed to be our new consulting physician, starting with the 2018-2019 school year. She works in the same office as Dr. Russell, who was our consulting physician for many years. Besides signing our standing orders for nursing practice, Dr. Walden is eager to assist in enhancing our concussion protocol to include a “return to academics” piece.

What did we do this year?

There were at least 60,410 visits to the nurse’s office this year. Those visits include everything from bloody noses and skinned knees, to concussion assessments and referrals, blood sugar crashes, medication doses, lice checks, one pair of scissors stuck in an electrical outlet, broken bones, broken teeth, dislocations, rashes, coughs, an eraser stuck in the ear, various items stuck in the nose, seizures, melt downs, choking incidents and supervision at OCS interviews. Each visit is matched by a power school entry detailing when they arrived, when they left, what was wrong, the nurse assessment, what the nurse did for them and where they went when they left, i.e. back to class or home.

Theses 60,410 visits do NOT include all the heights and weights, all the vision and hearing screenings, or any TB shots given, because they are recorded under a different section, but each one is also matched with an entry in Power School. Conservatively, those entries total at least 17,916. SPED referrals, staff visits or consults with staff, and the entries for end of year summaries are also not included in that number.

At least 50 students, who did not know they needed them but were found through our screenings, received glasses this year. Some of them couldn’t have afforded the glasses if it weren’t for the National Association of School Nurses vouchers the nurses gave them.

A few of our schools arranged for the Lion’s Club to do vision screenings this year. With their specialized screening device, students were referred to their vision specialist for issues undetectable using our screening charts. For instance, one student was found to have a cataract, something a standard screening would not have discovered. They are of particular benefit to the Special Needs, Intensive Needs, Pre-K and Kindergarten population. We hope to purchase such screening devices in the near future.

Hot Topics!

Vactrak!

Last summer we were Informed that in order to use the Vactrak system to check immunizations, every nurse had to sign an agreement promising we'd only use the system with parental permission. A form was created and permission is now recorded in Power School.

Starting this year, nurses are also required to enter all Hep B vaccinations given into the state Vactrak site. We participated in a Webinar training in February in order to gain access to that feature of Vactrak. Now, all doses of Hepatitis B along with their manufacturer, expiration dates and lot numbers will be tracked at the state level. If a batch of Hep B is found to be faulty and/or is recalled, it will be much easier to identify those who received it.

And then there are all the medications.....

School nurses administer controlled prescription medications for students with seizures and students with behavior issues like ADHD. They also administer prescription medications that are not controlled, such as Albuterol Inhalers, nebulizer treatments and various types of insulin. Over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol and Ibuprofen are dispensed daily on an as-needed basis. Emergency medications like Diastat (a rectal medication for uncontrolled seizures), Glucagon (an injectable medication when blood sugar goes too low) and Epi-pens (an injectable medication for severe allergic reaction) require specific training for use and require a 9-1-1 call, if used.

School nurses have the health expertise needed to develop, promote, and implement policies that are evidence-based; reduce errors; and increase the proper use and storage of medications in school settings (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2016; ISMP, 2012).

This year in our schools there were a total of 136 inhalers, 114 Epi-pens, 23 Glucagon injection kits and 4 doses of Diastat. There were 23 students with diabetes who were able to safely attend school because there was a school nurse. One student's insulin pump failed and it was the nurse who figured it out. Two other nurses have dealt repeatedly with diabetic students who come to school without the correct insulin or any at all. Even on their most stable days, diabetic students are at high risk for experiencing a medical crisis. We appreciate that our district keeps a full-time nurse at almost every school where there is a student with diabetes!

Hot Topics!

Immunizations!

Nurses here at KPBSD are committed to supporting Alaska Immunization laws that require students to be fully immunized or have a valid Religious or Medical exemption BEFORE they attend school.

Administrators have become more supportive of this than ever and our goal is to be 100% compliant by the time school starts next fall. Nurses have already been sending out notices to give parents as much time to prepare as possible.

After a minor correction with a medical exemption form, we passed our state audit this year with 100% compliance, upholding the the KPBSD nurses' tradition of excellence.

In-services and Education

There were three nurse in-services this year, held in August, October and March. Here are some of the topics covered:

- School Nursing: A Comprehensive Text, Chapter 19 – Common Complaints – Laura Peek, RN
- School Nursing: A Comprehensive Text, Chapter 18 – Acute Measures for Emergent Problems – Dixie St John, RN
- School Nursing: A Comprehensive Text, Chapter 23 – Allergies – Megan Starr, RN
- Self-Harm and Injury Prevention – Camille Hill
- Suicide Assessment – Angie Nelson
- Presentation on Rashes – Dr. Rachel Walden, MD
- Narcan Training – Andy Jones, State Director
- How to Communicate with Students with Intensive Needs and Autism – Dan Kaasa
- The Law and School Nursing – Colette Thompson, Atty
- Pediatric Dental Issues – Dr. McAlpine, DDS
- State Immunization Updates – Tami Marsters, PHN
- The Legalization of Marijuana and Its Effects on the Pediatric Population – Shari Connors from CPH
- Power School updates – Jordan Chilson

Staff from HR, payroll, personnel, etc., also provided updates and Clayton Holland led a discussion on the new lice protocol.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Nelson Mandela

In April, the nurses had the opportunity to attend the Alaska School Nurse Conference titled, “The Building Blocks of School Nursing,” and earn up to 14.5 CEU’s. Next year, our district will be hosting the conference and a committee has already started the planning process.

Hot Topics!

TB Risk!

Our district is still among those considered at low risk for contracting tuberculosis. However, on April 25th, the Dept. of State Epidemiology came out with a new form to determine that risk and it needs to be used for the 2018-2019 school year. That caused us to scramble because several of our elementary schools had already had their Kindergarten registration and the previous form had been used.

We quickly altered the new form for use by our district, got it out to the nurses, and the I.T. department has changed Power School to accommodate the new form.

The main difference between the old form and the new one is that the questions have been slightly altered and there are only three instead of four.

Budgets and Benefits

In July 2014, the JAMA published an article called, "Cost-Benefit Study of School Nursing Services." In a study of 78 school districts, having School Nurses resulted in a net benefit cost savings of 98.2 million dollars. Roughly broken down to fit a school district the size of KPBSD equates to a savings of \$1,843,553.67.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/1872779>

The rising cost of air travel greatly impacted our travel budget this year. Kenai Aviation closed and now we have to charter flights across the inlet. One of our nurses is contracted to serve Tebughna 14 days per year. The cost of a round trip ticket is now \$1,150. Fourteen trips at that price totals more than our entire travel allotment. We have coordinated with other departments to share the cost and managed to keep within our budget. Our trips across the bay from Homer also increased this year, which added to our travels costs.

We purchased new scales for 20 schools this year. The last time scales were purchased was about 25 years ago and many of the scales were no longer functional. Since we collaborate with the Division of Public Health by providing height and weight statistics for the State of Alaska Obesity Prevention and Control Program, it is important to be able to provide uniform and reliable data. Having working scales that are all the same will help accomplish that. The following is a link to the Obesity Prevention and Control results for the 2016-2017 school year: http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Obesity/school-partnerships/2016-17WeightStatus_KPBSD.pdf

We also spent over \$9,000 on Hepatitis B vaccine for the staff this year.

This fall we will be renewing nurse licenses, which is a major expense, but we are prepared.

Hot Topics!

Trends!

Nurses in the KPBSD are noticing 2 major trends among students:

In Elementary schools, nurses are seeing an increase in the number of Pre-K'ers and Kinders with Asthma and allergies severe enough to require inhalers and Epi-pens. In the 5th and 6th grades they are seeing more students with emotional needs.

At the High School level, nurses at both ends of the peninsula are noticing ever-increasing numbers of students considering suicide and self-harm. Nurses work closely with the school Psychologists to see that the students get the help they need.

Recently, a student came to see the nurse with physical complaints. Because of the nurse's astute assessment skills, she found out the student was in an overdose situation and got her life-saving help just in time!

The Impact of School Nurses

It would be impossible to measure something as intangible as the impact of a nurse on a student's physical or mental health. However, it is easy to imagine the huge impact on education that poor vision or poor hearing has, or that asthma, concussion or diabetes can have. One of the hallmarks of an RN that sets them apart from other practitioners with less education is their assessment skills. Besides the 50 students listed earlier who received glasses due to nurse screenings, the following previously unknown conditions were diagnosed by doctors this year directly due to a school nurse's assessment and referral:

- 7 students with Asthma
- 1 student with Diabetes
- 1 student who needed hearing aids
- many students with concussion

This year, nurses worked with the Public Health Department to help prevent the spread of a couple of cases of mumps and pertussis in our schools.

Hello. I'm Dr. Phillips, the Optometrist over at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. I just saw a student of yours with some pretty significant vision issues. They mentioned he was screened at school and told to get his eyes checked. I wanted to thank you for your efforts. It does make a difference.

Nurses in our district also help arrange the following activities:

- Bike rodeo
- Backpack program to send food home with students
- Safety Seal visits
- Presentations by local Dentists
- Red Ribbon and Drug Awareness activities
- Yoga instruction for students
- Medic First Aid – CPR classes for approx. ??staff and students were taught this year

Hot Topics!

School-Based Health Clinics!

In February, Iris toured the three school-based health clinics in Anchorage and was very impressed. Except for some electricity and water, these clinics operate at no cost to the school district. The clinics do not replace School Nurses, nor do they provide any of the same services that School Nurses provide. What DO school-based health clinics provide?

- Comprehensive physicals for sports or school-entry
- Reproductive health screening, testing and counseling
- Assess referrals from school nurses regarding strep throat, pink-eye, ear infections, etc. They also write prescriptions.
- Behavioral Therapy Services

We will continue to explore this possibility for our school district.

Goals for the 2018-2019 School Year

- Once the funding is settled, we need to hire nurses to fill the vacated positions at Kenai Alt, Kenai Central and SoHi.
- We originally thought that our district was going to host the Alaska School Nurse conference this year, but that was changed. Instead, we will be hosting it next spring for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Be 100% immunization compliant by the first day of school!
- Continue to pursue the possibility of school-based health clinics in our district.
- Purchase two of the PlusOptix screening devices to share between the schools in our district.
- Working with the School Health Nurse Advisory Committee, begin implementing Quality Assurance protocols for the Health Services staff.
- Working with the School Health Nurse Advisory Committee and our new consulting Physician, Dr. Walden, refine the concussion protocols to include a “return to learn” piece.
- Work with school secretaries to have all Initial and Annual Bloodborne Pathogen training completed at the start of the school year before staff start working with students.

As we continue to provide professional nursing services for the KPBSD, we hope to continue to be “a valuable link in the chain that helps each student achieve and maintain individual optimal health so that they are ready and able to learn.” Health Services Manual, Section 1.