

H.A.N.D.S. : HELPING DIABETIC STUDENTS
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Scholarship Winner

H.A.N.D.S. (Helping Administer to the Needs of the Student with Diabetes in School) is a course that was developed by the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). This course was offered as a pre-conference selection at the recent NASN Annual Conference. I have been a school nurse for 21 years and have gradually seen an increase in the number of students with both Type I and Type II diabetes. The complexity involved in their care continues to be a challenge. Since our goal as school nurses is to provide a safe environment for all students, including diabetics, I felt that I needed to keep current with the new research pertaining to diabetes.

H.A.N.D.S. gave me the opportunity to spend the day (6.5 hours) entirely on diabetic education and care. The information will be very helpful in training school staff and providing care to diabetic students. This course offered practical tips that reflect best practice standards.

Participants who complete the course are given a password. Through the NASN website they are able access forms, teaching videos, and current information that will be updated as necessary. The forms are currently in PDF format but this will be changed at a later date so that the forms can be edited. Being able to individualize forms to a specific student will be quite useful.

As I begin to prepare for the diabetic student's return to school, I am starting to organize individualized healthcare plans, emergency care plans, and scheduling trainings for unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) in the schools. This year I will utilize a "Diabetes Management Training Kit" that will include all the supplies required to train UAP on the diabetic student's care. This kit will be stocked and ready to carry to each training. Suggested contents from the H.A.N.D.S. handbook include: blood glucose monitor, blood glucose strips, lancing device lancets, cotton balls, alcohol wipes, gloves, ketone strips, glucagon kit, insulin pen, insulin pen needles, insulin vial, insulin syringes, insulin pump color brochure/diagram, insulin pump infusion set, sharps container, and glucose gel or glucose tabs. These items may be purchased or gathered from expired materials, with permission from the student's family. All items will be placed in a plastic kit or large plastic zip lock bag and clearly labeled "Sample Training Kit for Demonstration Use Only". Of course any student-specific information will be removed from materials and caution will be used in handling sharps.

As the 2007-2008 school year begins I will have seven school which includes three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and two alternative schools. A preliminary report indicates that there will be fourteen diabetics in this assignment. We know that getting off to a good start, with a plan in place, makes for a better school year. H.A.N.D.S. has helped prepare me for the challenges that lie ahead.

"Because you care, school is better because you are there."

Janet M. Smith, RN, BSN, NCSN