

September 2007 President's Letter

It is easy to tell September has arrived. A new school year has begun and all across the state students have resumed classes. At the same time, school nurses are working on nursing care plans (NCP's) or individualized healthcare plans (IHP's) for our increasingly complex students.

As you work on all of these, get medications in place, do your first aid and begin your formal and informal health teaching, remember to tell others, "I'm a school nurse and I help students succeed in school." Thanks to our work, teachers are able to teach, and students are able to learn. We can be proud that we are school nurses!

In my last President's letter, I encouraged you to begin collecting your stories. Now we need you to use them. There is a special session of the state legislature extending from September 18th until the beginning of October. This legislative session is focused on the budget.

One of the areas legislators would like to cut is school health. School health services (us!) is a major component of school health. The three major associations involved in school health (FASN, FSHA, & FAPHERD) have written a joint position paper opposing this action. (Click on the Legislative link for a copy of the statement.)

Now we need you . . . all of you . . . to tell your story. This is not just a DOH issue. Where the legislature chooses to spend its money is an indication of its priorities. If school health is not a priority for the legislature, why should it be a priority for school districts or health care foundations or hospital funded school nurses or taxing districts?

Just as FASN cannot lobby, neither can DOH nor DOE employees in their jobs. We can, however, speak out as private citizens who are voters. We can tell our story! We can write as "a nurse that works with children". We can write as "a parent of a child in school." We can remind them that as a voter, we voted so they could represent us and this means a great deal to us and to the children in this state. If we are not a face or a voice, it is easy to cut the anonymous "they". If we are going to work to prevent any cuts, we need to remind them that there are people out there who are watching and listening. We are watching and listening because we care!

As the FASN Board approved the decision to add our name to this position paper, I was reminded of our goal: to serve school nurses statewide. What better way to serve than to remind legislators of the need for school nurses and health services across the state. As nurses and as voters, we can and should be heard. Will you join us?

Kathy

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