

UTAH SCHOOLS IN HEALTH CARE CRISIS

CHILDREN HAVE COMPLEX HEALTH NEEDS

- Children are being released from hospitals and returning to school requiring nursing care during school hours. Some procedures done in hospitals need to be done at school.
- More complex medications and procedures are needed in Utah schools. For example, there are children that need:
 - Medications given through catheters which go directly into the heart
 - Emergency rectal medications to stop seizures
 - Insulin injections administered during the school day
 - Other complex medications and procedures during school hours (i.e. gastrostomy tube feedings, urinary catheterizations, tracheostomy suctioning)

CHILDREN NEED SAFE MEDICAL CARE

- Medical emergencies at school may be managed by a teacher, classroom aide, secretary, or custodian because a nurse is not available every day.
- Staff and volunteers may be well intentioned, but may not have the competence, skills, or availability to handle the responsibility and complexity required to respond to complex medical conditions. For example:
 - In Utah, a student self administered six times the prescribed dosage of her inhaler medication for an asthma attack. She spent a week in the hospital and is still recovering. There was no school nurse available that day.
- Every day at least one school calls 911.
 - 911 service is not available in all areas of the state
 - 911 response times vary from minutes to hours

CHILDREN'S HEALTH IMPACTS EDUCATION

- Healthy kids learn better. A child who is sick or in pain may not be able to learn.
- The dramatic increase in chronic illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, seizures, and severe food allergies may impede a child's ability to learn if not properly supported at school.
- Federal laws mandate that schools provide the services children need to access their education.
- Utah has a responsibility to ensure all students receive quality health care at school as well as a quality education.
- Health promotion and wellness activities, such as improved nutrition and physical activity, help all students perform better academically and promote the development of healthy lifestyles.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

- Utah's forty public school districts have approximately 500,000 students being served by 129 full and part time school nurses.
 - There is approximately 1 nurse for every 6,127 students
 - Some nurses serve up to 14 schools each
 - Some nurses travel 3 hours one way to reach a school
- Approximately 12,000 students attend charter schools in Utah. Most charter schools provide no school nursing services.
- The school nurse may be the only health care provider that some children see on a regular basis.