



Children's School Services

June 2016 | Volume 8 | Issue 6

Questions of Mental Health often Fall to School Nurses—If there is one

Patricia Tolson, school nurse at Van Ness Elementary School in southeast D.C., says she is the first and only line of defense when it comes to spotting potential physical and mental health problems. At least one in five young people in the U.S. exhibits the signs or symptoms of a mental health problem. Educators are increasingly seeing students who need help but they are not sure how to respond. According to the American Association of Pediatrics, schools function as the mental health system for up to eighty percent of children who need help. So school nurses play a critical role.



Patricia Tolson, RN, BSN, School Nurse

In this Pre-k through 2nd grade school, Tolson says children stop by for everything from needing their asthma inhalers to playground scrapes to vision tests. But that's not all a nurse sees. Some come by often with vague symptoms. And that, Tolson says, could be the first sign that there is something far more serious going on. Tolson says "feeling tired" could be because children, for whatever reason, just did not sleep well. At other times, it could be that someone touched them inappropriately or they could have been in a fight with someone or witnessed a fight.

"School nurses are the detectives in that school...they're the eyes and ears of public health," says Donna Mazyck, the executive director of the National Association of School Nurses. She says nurses look for patterns. She added, "If that student comes back with the same symptoms every single day that week, that school nurse is going to begin to connect the dots. This is great if there is actually a school nurse but unfortunately some schools share nurses and others have just one nurse for an entire district.

One other challenge is that school nurses get very little training when it comes to mental health. Mazyck says she herself was overwhelmed when she was a school nurse. "I was very surprised at the number of mental health concerns," she says. Depression, trauma, anxiety, grief. "Students who did not even know what to do to calm themselves down. They would go from 0 to 60 at the height of their concerns. They didn't know how to cope." Sharon Stephens is the co-director of the National Center for Mental Health. She is also an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Her team trains nurses all over the country about mental health. She says the need for help is soaring, yet sometimes school nurses feel helpless about even broaching the topic with kids. Stephan says nurses are not expected to be mental health therapists or psychiatrists. But she tells nurses that there two simple questions they can ask to see if a child needs to be seen by someone. "Is the student acting or behaving differently than they were before? And the other thing is are they somehow far outside the norm of what you would expect?" Training will help but schools must recognize that mental health is critical to educational success. Right now she says the only time everyone pays attention is when there is a school shooting or suicide. And Stephen says that perception is a little "misguided." Its also not about just one student's mental health. It is much more effective if we can support all students. And seeing school nurses as a partner in that effort is an important part of making that happen.

Kavitha Cardoza, National Public Radio

https://wamu.org/news/16/05/24/questions_of_mental_health_often_fall_to_school_nurses_if_a_school_has_one

Welcome to Children's School Services—June 2016 New Hire

Oluwatoyin Adelaku, LPN—Ward 8



June 2016 Health Observances

Cataract Awareness Month

Men's Health Month

Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month

National Aphasia Awareness Month

National Congenital Cytomegalovirus Awareness Month

National Safety Month

National Scleroderma Awareness Month

National Rip Current Awareness Week (June 5-11)

National Cancer Survivors Day (June 5)

Men's Health Week (June 13-19)

National Lightning Safety Awareness Week (June 19-25)

World Sickle Cell Day (June 19)

Healthy Recipe of the Month—Creamy Avocado Pasta

Ingredients:

- 1 medium sized ripe avocado, pitted
- 1/2 lemon, juice and lemon zest to garnish
- 2-3 garlic cloves, to taste
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt, or to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh basil
- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 servings/6 oz of your choice of pasta
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions:

- Bring several cups of water to a boil in a medium sized pot. Add in your pasta, reduce heat to medium, and cook until Al dente, about 8-10 minutes.
- Meanwhile, make the sauce by placing the garlic cloves, lemon juice and olive oil into a food processor. Process until smooth. Now add in the pitted avocado, basil and salt. Process until smooth and creamy.
- When pasta is done cooking, drain and rinse in a strainer and place pasta into a large bowl. Pour on sauce and toss until fully combined. Garnish with lemon zest and black pepper. Serve immediately.

Tomorrow's Smiles are Made in Today's Preventive Programs

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), starting your child off with good dental care can help protect their teeth for many years. Children who have healthy teeth are more likely to have healthy teeth as adults. The ADA recommends parents take their children to a dentist by their first birthday. The District of Columbia's Department of Health, Public and Charter Schools are working together with Gordon Dental Associates and Howard University to help parents with regular yearly dental visits. Through a preventive School-Based Oral Health Program, a team of local dentists and allied dental professionals bring services directly to elementary and high schools that promote healthy children and healthy smiles. When the government, community, parents, schools, and health care providers work together, we create a solid foundation to assure continued proper oral hygiene throughout the child's early and adolescent years.

The School-Based Oral Health Services include:

- Oral Health Education
- Dental Exam
- Dental Sealants – a material applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth to protect teeth from bacteria and acid attacks
- Dental Prophylaxis (Dental Cleaning)
- Fluoride Varnish – a mineral that helps make teeth stronger and protects teeth from decay
- Dental Home Referrals – referrals to dentists in the community for continued oral care

The goal of the program is to build strong academic/community partnerships that make a positive change in the oral health and overall health of school aged children in the District of Columbia. The ADA recommends the following key ingredients in preventing tooth decay and maintaining a healthy smile:

- Brushing twice a day with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste
- Cleaning between the teeth daily with floss or another interdental cleaner
- Eating a balanced diet and limiting snacks
- Visiting your dentist regularly

Join Us as we continue to promote services that invest in **Tomorrow's Smile!** For more information about taking care of your mouth and teeth, visit MouthHealth.org, the ADA's website just for patients.

Dr. Donna Grant-Mills, Associate Dean
Student Affairs and Admissions
Howard University College of Dentistry

Ketcham ES Salutes the School Nurse

During Nurses Week 2016, students and staff at Ketcham ES honored and celebrated their beloved school nurse, Ruth B. Richardson by showering her with flowers, cards, and gifts. Richardson has been the school nurse at Ketcham for the last couple of years and has established a great rapport with all she encounters. The staff also presented her with a certificate of appreciation for her dedicated service.



Nurse Richardson pictured with
Ketcham ES staff

Ruth B. Richardson, RN-BC, BA, BSN, MA, EdD
School Nurse—Ketcham ES

Children's School Services Nurse Receives Structural Empowerment Award

Children's National Health System takes time every year to honor its hardworking nurses in a week of celebration around May 12th in honor of Florence Nightingale's birthday. Nurses Week is a great time to highlight the work, dedication and passion of nurses who go above and beyond in their practice. This year, our very own Caridad Wright, school nurse at Aiton ES in ward 7 was one of three recipients to be given the Structural Empowerment Award. The award ceremony was held on Thursday, May 12th at the main hospital campus.

Congratulations Nurse Wright and keep up the good work!

Beulah Gwynn, RN, BSN
Nurse Manager, Ward 7



Caridad Wright, RN

A Great Read

Anne Watson, BSN, PhD, Chantel Skipper, MSN, CPNP-AC, CPN, RN-BC, Rachel Steury, MSN, APRN, C-NP, Heather Walsh, MSN RN PCNS-BC CHSE CPN collaborated on a journal article entitled "Inpatient nursing care and early warning scores: a workflow mismatch" which is featured in the *Journal of Nursing Care Quality*. The article discusses a study that evaluated workflow variables surrounding calculation and documentation of one pediatric hospital's use of an early warning score. Results indicated that there were significant delays in documentation of early warning scores by RNs and inconsistencies between the early warning scores and vital signs collected and documented by non-RN personnel. These findings reflected information obtained from the RNs about how they prioritize tasks and use work-arounds to specific systems issues involving assessment and documentation in the electronic medical record.

This newsletter is published monthly by the Children's School Services School Health Nursing Program.

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