

## School Nurses Asthma Survey Results Help Formulate Goals for Improvement

Your responses to the School Nurses' Asthma Survey provided valuable information to help plan our improvement efforts for the 2015-2016 school year. We received 126 complete responses. The factors identified by the most respondents as delaying or preventing return to class when students present to the health suite with asthma symptoms were (1) not having a valid asthma action plan or order for medication, (2) not having an inhaler in the school, (3) failure of parents to comply with nurses' requests for orders or medications, and (4) inability to contact parents by phone. Less common barriers to care included not being on controller medications; not having a spacer available; action plans that were illegible, incomplete, or expired; no previous asthma history; exposure to known triggers; and failure to bring self-carried medication to school. Most respondents agreed that inability to access primary care services, failure to recognize early signs, and severe respiratory distress not responsive to albuterol were "rarely" or "never" contributing factors.

Over 90 percent of respondents indicated that they felt confident in their ability to assess a child's asthma severity, create a clear and accurate record of the child's response to treatment, and document all elements of the asthma action plan in health office. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that teachers in their school know how to recognize asthma symptoms and send students to the nurse when treatment is needed. Only 38 percent of respondents agreed that "students in my school can be confident that the air they breathe will not aggravate their asthma." One-third of respondents indicated that their schools have policies to help reduce or prevent students' contact with allergens or irritants that can make their asthma worse.

Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed that it would be helpful if providers could send asthma action plans directly to the school nurse. Seventy-four percent agreed that "most of the kids who have to be dismissed early because of asthma symptoms could go back to class if they had an inhaler at school." Three out of four respondents agreed that standing orders for albuterol and a stock supply of medication would contribute to better care.

**"Only 38% of respondents agreed that 'students in my school can be confident that the air they breathe will not aggravate their asthma'"**

Several respondents commented about the importance of educating parents about use of controller medications and trigger avoidance. Some respondents cautioned that bypassing the parent with direct orders or delivery of medications might result in fewer opportunities to empower parents to improve management of their child's asthma.

We hear you. Your survey responses point clearly to goals for improvement this year: **To ensure that every student with asthma has a current asthma action plan and rescue medication available in school before they present with wheezing so that your prompt treatment can enable them to return to class.** Your PI committee is working on developing a work plan to facilitate your efforts to get those AAPs and medications in place. In the near future, your Outcomes and Evaluations Unit will provide you with data to help you monitor your progress and will explore the feasibility of some of the policy changes you have suggested. Thanks to all who thoughtfully completed the survey. Your insights are invaluable!

Janet Gingold, MD, MPH  
School Physician

## September Health Observances

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month  
Fruit and Veggies—More Matters Month  
Healthy Aging Month  
National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month  
National Food Safety Education Month  
National Pediculosis Prevention Month/Head Lice Prevention Month  
National Preparedness Month  
National Recovery Month  
National Sickle Cell Month  
National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month  
Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Sepsis Awareness Month  
Sports Eye Safety Month  
Whole Grains Month  
World Alzheimer's Month  
National Suicide Prevention week (7-13)  
World Suicide Prevention Day (10)  
National Celiac Disease Awareness Day (13)  
National School Backpack Awareness Day (16)  
National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day (18)  
Family Health and Fitness Day USA (26)  
World Heart Day (29)  
National Women's Health and Fitness Day (30)

## Back to School Book Bag Drive at Largo Community Church

My church, Largo Community Church in Mitchellville, Maryland, recently sponsored a book bag drive for the needy students in the community. Book bags, along with school supplies, were donated by church members. This is one of the many outreach projects that we do to give back. There is no greater feeling than helping those in need!

Rose Moore, RN, BSN  
School Nurse— Drew Elementary School



Nurse Moore at the  
Back-to-School Book bag

## Healthy Recipe of the Month— Chicken Salad and Greens

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup plain, nonfat Greek-style yogurt
- 1/4 cup low fat mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 large celery stalk, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1/3 cup grapes, cut in half
- 2 cups leftover roasted chicken, chopped into 1/2 inch pieces
- 4 cups romaine lettuce, coarsely chopped

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine yogurt, mayonnaise, salt, pepper, celery, red onion, grapes and chicken
2. Mix gently until everything is well coated in dressing
3. Divide lettuce between four bowls
4. Top each bowl with chicken salad. Serve cold

Serves 4

## Family Fun Day

The newly developed Barry Farms Recreation Center hosted its first ever “Back-to-School Family Fun Day” on Thursday, August 20th. It was an awesome sight to see the community come out in droves to take part in a day full of health education screenings, immunizations for children, food, and fun. Medical mobile units from D.C. Healthy Start, MedStar Family Choice, Medical Outreach Services, and many more lined the streets of the community. Julia Mayrant, RN, BSN, helped out with blood pressure screenings. Mayrant is the school nurse for Excel Academy, a school located in the Barry Farms neighborhood. The mobile units hoped to bridge the gap for underserved communities and ensure they have access to medical resources. Parents and children were excited and grateful for the opportunity to ask questions and seek medical insight.

Yvonne Akinwumi, RN, BSN  
School Nurse– Thurgood Marshall Academy PCHS

## A Summer of Giving Back

“Giving Back” was my motto for the summer, and I wanted to help as many people as I could. I fed the homeless at a men’s shelter in Prince George’s County, Maryland, throughout the summer. I often ask Rose Moore, RN, BSN, school nurse at Drew ES, to tag along with me. Next, I donated some much-needed blood to the American Red Cross, which always experiences shortages in the summer months. Lastly, when Kurt Newman, MD, President and CEO of Children’s National Health System, sent out a call for volunteers from Children’s National to assist with the Barry Farms Community Health Expo, I was more than happy to serve the wonderful residents of Ward 8. I am writing to challenge my colleagues to volunteer or donate to the less fortunate. It is more than rewarding!



Selinda Boyd– Graham (left) with fellow school nurse, Rose Moore, volunteering at a men’s homeless shelter



Selinda Boyd-Graham with Dr. Bear at the Barry Farms Health Expo

Selinda Boyd-Graham, RN-BC, BSN  
School Nurse, Randle Highland ES

## Upcoming Health Events

Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a five-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders. The training will be held October 7th from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Participants will receive 8 Personal Learning Units.

<http://washingtondc.eventful.com/events/youth-mental-health-first-/Eo-001-084491792-1@2015100708>

## The New Health Suite at Savoy Elementary School

In anticipation of the new school year, I decided to revamp and liven up my health suite. I wanted to create an environment that was much more inviting and kid-friendly. I chose a yellow shade for the walls because it is soft but bright and will have a positive effect on anyone who enters the health suite. I couldn't have completed this renovation without the support of my principal, Mrs. Donyale Butler. I also want to thank Mr. Charles Pointer, Mr. Larry Drayton, and Mr. Roland Bynum for their help and hard work!



Savoy ES Principal Donyale Butler (left) with Katrena Clark, school nurse

Katrena N. Clark, RN, BSN  
School Nurse– Savoy Elementary School

## Why Seafood is Good for Your Heart

We all know that fish is typically healthy, but did you know that it's also good for your heart? The American Heart Association recommends that you eat it at least twice a week. Some studies show that regular fish consumption lowers one's risk of heart disease. Fish is a much healthier source of protein than red meat because it does not contain as much saturated fat. Fatty fish is an excellence source of fatty acids known as omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids lowers the amount of triglycerides in the blood and may also lower blood pressure. Salmon, albacore tuna, mackerel, herring, trout, sardines, and shellfish are fish with the highest amounts of omega-3 fatty acids.

As you start to add fish to your diet, you must be aware of fish contaminants. Some fish live in polluted waters and may be contaminated by mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls. Too much contaminated fish can counter the heart-healthy benefits.

Beth W. Orenstein

<http://www.healthgrades.com/right-care/heart-health/why-seafood-is-good-for-your-heart>

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

Barbara S. Scott, MSN, NE-BC, RN-BC  
Executive Director

Natalie Peart, MA  
Program Coordinator, Editor  
[npeart@childrensnational.org](mailto:npeart@childrensnational.org)