



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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John R. Kasich/Governor

Richard Hodges/Director of Health

Dear Superintendent:

The National Association of School Nurses has designated Wednesday, May 11, 2016 as **National School Nurse Day**. This day is set aside to celebrate the specialty practice of school nursing and recognize the contributions school nurses make every day to improve the safety, health, and academic success of all students. I encourage you to recognize the school nurses in your district.

Parents and teachers feel secure that children are safe at school and their health needs are met every day by specialized school nurses. School nurses have the skills to plan and implement care for students with chronic and medically complex conditions and prepare school staff to recognize and respond appropriately to potential emergencies. Prevention is key in school wellness and safety, but planned emergency response and disaster preparedness is an essential part of the important role school nurses play.

As you are likely aware, a new state law (House Bill 39) which took effect Feb. 1 allows schools to procure and administer asthma inhalers to anyone experiencing an asthma emergency on the school premises. Many schools are still implementing previous law to stock epinephrine autoinjectors and to provide safe and appropriate care to students with diabetes. These legislative initiatives require training of school staff by a licensed health professional. I would encourage you to involve your school nurse in the development of health policies, services and training in your schools to meet the requirements of the new legislation.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) School Nursing program provides continuing education opportunities to support the ongoing professional development of nurses. In addition to the annual *Orientation for Nurses New to Ohio Schools*, three *Regional School Nurse Conferences*, live webcasts and online, independent study courses, ODH staff provide technical assistance by phone or e-mail. Please encourage your nurses to take advantage of these professional development offerings and other resources found at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/chss/schnurs/schnurs1.aspx>.

In 2014, an estimated 420,000 children in Ohio had asthma, the most common chronic illness among Ohio children. To aid schools in ensuring students with asthma are in school and ready to learn, the ODH School Nursing and Asthma programs are collaborating to provide an all day conference *Asthma Education: A Train-the-Trainer for Ohio School Nurses*. The conference will be held on June 15 in Reynoldsburg. Registration information may be found at the link above.

In closing, thank you for taking time out on May 11 to join people around the nation to recognize the profession of school nursing and the individuals who provide health care services in Ohio schools every day.

Sincerely,


Richard Hodges, MPA
Director