



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION 4-2007

Support for Establishing a State School Nurse Consultant Position

Sponsor: Alaska School Nurses Association
V. Kay Lahdenpera

WHEREAS, although school nurse to student ratios in some of Alaska's urban areas are adequate, smaller communities have very few school nurses, and most school districts serving Bush communities have no school nurse employed. The State DOE and the Alaska School Nurses Association (ASNA) has no accurate data on total numbers of school nurses employed in Alaska, but ASNA estimates it to be approximately 1:500, based on member contacts statewide and 2007 Alaska public school enrollment data. The higher ratio of school nurse to students in the "Rail Belt" and Juneau school districts has a large impact on this statewide ratio due to the greater population in those regions.

WHEREAS, the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommend at least one nurse per 750 students, with modified ratios of fewer students per school nurse depending on severity of disabilities within the student population¹.

WHEREAS, Alaska is one of few states that has no State School Nurse Consultant (SSNC). Thirty-nine states have a SSNC, and four have consultant positions both in their state education agencies and their state health agencies²

WHEREAS, this position serves as an important liaison between state health and educational agencies and all school nurses, school nurse administrators, and policy makers concerned with overall health and wellness, school disaster planning, special needs students, immunization, and all aspects of school health. A State School Nurse Consultant also would serve as a leader in the scope and practice of professional school nursing in Alaska, and could provide some guidance to administrators in districts with no school nurses.

¹ American Nurses Association. (2007) *Assuring Safe, High Quality Health Care in Pre-K Through 12 Educational Settings* Silver Springs, Maryland: Author.

² National Association of State School Nurse Consultants (2003) *Advocating for a State School Nurse Consultant* Kent, Ohio: Author



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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Public Health Association supports adequate and safe ratios of school nurses to students in all areas of our state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Alaska Public Health Association will advocate for the creation of State School Nurse Consultant position.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the position of the Alaska Public Health Association until it is withdrawn or modified by a subsequent resolution.

Adopted by vote of the ALPHA general membership on the 3rd day of December, 2007.

Fiscal & Public Health Statement: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders. A State School Nurse Consultant would serve as a leader in the scope and practice of professional school nursing, enabling schools and districts to improve the health of students in Alaska.