School Nursing: Moving to the Other Side of the Rainbow

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How do we know we have a problem?

- School nurses being laid off
- Districts hiring LPNs or aides instead of SN
- Examples:
  - 2 schools in California refused to follow the IEP for a student with severe autism and diabetes. They offered the family $86,000 to sign away the child’s right to an education and keep the child out of school
  - Mercedes Mears, 5th grader from Washington died of asthma attack in arms of aide trying to get her to use her inhaler rather than give the EpiPen just feet away

More Examples

- Fayette KT: 2012 = 27 School nurses; 2013 = 14
  - It was called a ‘new model of care’
  - Planned to use LPNs and have RNs supervise
- Louisiana: School nurses cut 33% in 2012
- Cleveland OH: school nurses cut 55%
- Long Beach CA: school nurses cut 25%
- Philadelphia: 1/3 of school nurses laid off 2012
  - Laporshia Mays was 6 years old with asthma
    - School called at end of day that child did not feel well
    - Child came home in respiratory distress
    - Died on the way to the hospital
  - Did school nurse cuts kill this child?

- New Bedford CT, 6 year old with Type I DM was told by school district to find another school because budget cuts precluded them from having a full time school nurse
  - Family went to ABC News, city council, the school board
    - Request was rescinded and school nurse was hired

- One win……..MANY losses

The impact

- Fewer school nurses caring for children in schools
- Decreased membership to NASN and state organization
- Fewer hands-on-deck to advance to profession
- Fewer people coming to conferences and cancelled conferences
- Fewer nurses to develop a game plan to stop this madness!

- No one cares that we have Standards of Practice
- No one cares that we try to promote Evidence-based Practice
- No one cares that you have advanced education in school health
- No one cares that you also promote health and prevent disease
There is NO School Nurse Shortage!!!

- No school nurse will work for LPN wages
- No school nurse will call her work part time and agree to work without benefits
- No school nurse will take the legal responsibility of thousands of children
- There is NO shortage of school nurses; there is a shortage of schools willing to pay for qualified school nurses, so that every school and every child has a school nurse

It has happened before in hospitals

- 1990s ➔ managed care
  - dictated shorter hospital stays
  - Laid off RNs and hired techs and aides
  - Resulted in remaining nurses being called 'supervisors' so they could not unionize
  - It was called a 'new model of health care'
  - Nurses had increased legal implications as they HAD to delegate and supervise.

It has happened before in hospitals

- Outcomes of managed care
  - Increased mortality and morbidity
  - Increased rates of failing to rescue
  - Increased nosocomial infections, pressure sores, falls, lengths of stay
  - Decreased satisfaction scores
  - Increased readmissions within 30 days

The concept of REASONABLE RISK

Degree of risk from lawsuit in the future compared to the amount of savings now.

It is happening again in hospitals

- Laying off nurses or increasing patient loads
- Blaming it on Affordable Care Act
- BUT — hospital error rates are going up

- Yet INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE MAKING LOTS OF MONEY — and so are hospital CEOs
  - And nobody is complaining about that!!!!!

RESEARCH SHOWS

- Increasing the percentage of BSN nurses improves scores in all measurements
  - Results in better patient outcomes
  - It is a major criteria for magnet status in hospitals
"And then there is the damage done by the American Diabetes Association
- Forced states to change Nurse Practice Acts allowing non-nurses to give glucagon and insulin
- Focused only on diabetes and not on other chronic conditions
- Worked against us rather than with us
- Said they are 'helping kids be safe at school', but is allowing teachers and coaches to give insulin 'safe'?

The bottom line....
- MONEY
- QUALITY DOES NOT MATTER
- SCIENCE DOES NOT MATTER
- THE HEALTH OF THE CHILD DOES NOT MATTER

In the schools...
- Cram more kids in the classroom
- Have secretary or teachers or aides give meds and do treatments
- DEFER THE COST TO FAMILY OR THEIR INSURANCE
  - EMT
  - Allow schools of nursing or athletic training to do screenings – WITH NO FOLLOW-UP
  - Urgent care is not the responsibility of the schools
- Health care is NOT a priority for the school
- Most schools are unaware of the impact of school nursing on the bottom line
- Schools don’t care that school nurses decrease ER visits by children by 80%
- Schools don’t care that school nurses send home only 5% of the children they see compared to secretaries and other UAPs who send home 18%

In New Jersey...
- 2012 – Newark NJ settled a case by agreeing to improve special education services
  - No progress to date
  - Only 32% receive special education services in a timely manner
- December 2013, unpublished DOE report
  - 1/3 of urban schools fail to meet basic health, safety, and educational suitability standards
  - NJ Schools Development Authority must fund and implement all improvements needed to ensure students are educated in safe building
    - It is not happening

Hillel quote
- If I am not for myself, then who will be for me?
- And if I am only for myself, then what am I?
- And if not now, when?
Current quote

• It you are not at the table....
  • You are on the menu

So what are we going to do?
What are the answers?

• Couch everything in money
  • How do you save the school money
  • How much money do you bring into the school
  • Real, donated items, in-kind services
  • Write it down and let the principal know
• Watch how schools grab ‘free’ government money
  • Evaluate the outcomes
  • Tobacco monies
  • Abstinence-only education
  • Security guards/police/resource officers
  • Look at the outcomes

Police Resource Officers
• 10,000 (compared to 70,000 school nurses)
• Resulted in increased arrests or misd
  non-violent behaviors and sending more children to criminal courts
  WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE CAUSES
• Many have nothing to do all day
• One school bucked the system and invested in their students, and
  violence decreased by 90%
  • They had “engagement coaches who provide support, encouragement, and a
  sense of safety”
  • School nurses can lead this charge

No School Nurse Here
• Let parents and staff know when there is no school nurse in the
  building
  • Empower parents to complain
  • Start support group for parents of children with chronic conditions and
    empower them first
  • North Carolina has Parents Advocating for School Health
  • Engage staff as your advocates, and you be theirs
  • NOTICE: It is the Health Office if no school nurse is there – not the Nurse’s
    Office

Show that you make a difference

• Have outcome data that shows that absence of a school nurse and
  your programs hurts them financially
  • Fewer kids in their seats
  • Fewer healthy kids
  • All resulting in lower test scores and decreased money coming to the school
• Find out what is important to the principal, superintendent, school
  board and make this a priority
  • WE CAN HELP YOU!!!
Snoop Around the Building

- Look for ways the school can save money even if other positions will be cut
- This is not the time to be Mr. Nice Guy

Community Involvement

- Community Advisory Groups
- Include someone from the media
- Joint venture with local children's hospital or pediatric group
- Get stories out to the media
  - "What do school nurses do?"
    - We had x children with diabetes, y with asthma, z with … In addition, a children had an accident that required assessment and first aid. The school nurse made a difference by …

Medicaid

- Make sure you get every penny due to you
- Make sure it goes into the health office budget and not the general budget
- Make sure they know that without you, they would not qualify for Medicaid funds

Cross Train

- Nursing gave everything away
  - IT IS TIME TO TAKE IT BACK
- Be an active member of IEP/504 teams
- Learn the roles of social work, counseling, and nutrition.
  - Many of the 30 credits you have taken are a "waste" of your time. It benefits Schools of Education.
  - Require classes that allow you to cross-train and be more diverse

- You can take their role, but they cannot take yours
- Make yourself indispensable
- Children are 25% of the population, but they are 100% of the future
- "If the forces within us don’t move us, the forces outside us will" (Dan O’Neal, ANA)