



## National Association of School Nurses

### Joint Statement

#### School Nurse/School-Based Health Center Partnership

The *National Association of School Nurses*, the *National Assembly on School-Based Health Care*, and the *American School Health Association, School Nurse Section* have collaborated to develop the following statement about the role of school nurses and school-based health centers. It is the intent of all three groups that schools are best served when all health care providers in school settings work closely together to improve the health of students.

School nurses and school-based health center (SBHC) staff share an important mission: protecting and advancing the health and well-being of our nation's school-aged children. Although multiple health professionals in a school setting may have distinctive and complementary functions, funding, and accountability, their objectives are met effectively and efficiently through collaboration. Working as partners, school nurses and staff of school-based health centers are able to increase compliance with treatment plans, facilitate access to needed health and mental health care, monitor outcomes of care, uniformly document care, collect data about health needs and outcomes of care, and provide case management – all critical for improving the quality of health care and academic outcomes for school-aged children and youth.

The school nurse is responsible for managing the health of all students while they are in the school. The school nurse routinely assesses students' needs, utilizing and valuing the additional easily accessible, and user-friendly resource of the SBHC for students who need health, mental health, and social services. The staff of SBHCs either directly provides or makes available, to eligible students, age-appropriate primary services such as health, dental, mental health, social services, and health education. Research indicates that SBHCs provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective way to deliver health services.

Both the school nurse and the SBHC have distinct roles and each contributes to students' health, academic outcomes, life-long achievement, and over-all student and staff well-being. One does not replace the need for the other. In support of successful school nurse-school-based health center partnerships, a shared vision of collaboration is characterized by:

- inclusion of students, their families, and school staff within the parameters of confidentiality
- well-defined roles and responsibilities that promote seamless and comprehensive care for students and their families
- mutual respect and support for each partner's contributions
- cooperative planning and implementation of school health services and programs to promote the health of the student body
- joint policies and procedures that ensure the quality and confidentiality of care received by students
- information sharing and exchange that protects student privacy and ensures continuity and coordination of care
- a collaborative focus on student academic outcomes

*We call upon school and community health professionals to join with us in affirming our mutual responsibility to healthy, productive students.*

#### Reference:

*The Role of the School Nurse in School Based Health Centers*, Position Statement, National Association of School Nurses, 2001. [www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org)

Adopted: October 2001