



POSITION STATEMENT

Infectious Diseases

HISTORY:

There has been a resurgence of infectious diseases in the school population resulting from drug resistant strains of common infectious diseases and the emergence of new infectious diseases for which there are currently no vaccines and no cure. These diseases may spread by one or more of the following routes:

1. Airborne
2. Blood borne
3. Direct and/or indirect contact
4. Sexual contact
5. Fecal-oral
6. Mother to unborn child

DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE:

Five major issues for school nurses are:

1. Preventing infections by the use of vaccines
2. Educating about behaviors to avoid exposure to pathogens
3. Preventing transmission of infectious diseases at school
4. Providing appropriate nursing care and health counseling
5. Protecting the confidentiality of persons with infectious diseases who attend school

RATIONALE:

Health care professionals have identified a number of prevention and risk-reduction measures that individuals may use to avoid exposure to pathogens. The school nurse, because of educational background and knowledge and also because of accessibility to school-aged children and youth during a time when health habits and decision-making skills are being formed, is in a unique position to counsel and educate students and staff about infectious diseases.

CONCLUSION:

It is the position of SNOW that school nurses should utilize their professional skills to assist school districts with infectious disease prevention programs and the development of policies to insure the appropriate inclusion/exclusion criteria and support infected students and staff. School nurses should assist in the development and implementation of educational programs that are a part of a pre-K-12 comprehensive health education program. They should further utilize their professional knowledge to be integrally involved in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases and advocate for public policy to support education services and research.

References/Resources:

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Adopted: October 2003