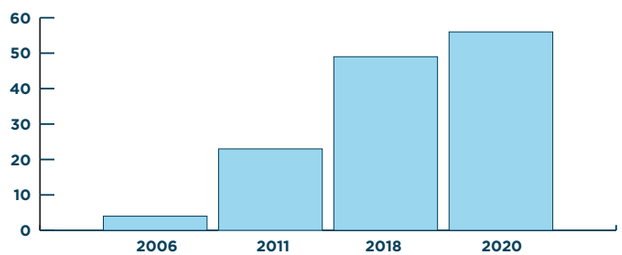
School Nurse Case Management of Chronic Conditions

An average 17%-19% of the North Carolina student population receives services in school each year related to a chronic health condition such as asthma or diabetes. Optimal control of health conditions supports student wellness and access to education. Learning self-management is also a goal for students who may often live with these conditions for many years. School nurses work with students, families, staff, and providers to assure that needed care and support are in place, often through providing case management services directed to individual student needs. School nurse case management is defined as the intentional use and documentation of the nursing process in a manner that achieves individualized health and educational goals for students. Case management services by school nurses has been a priority focus since 2006. The number of school districts implementing a standards-based program, used by all district nurses, has improved over time. The growth in standards-based case management programs in NC LEAs can be seen in the following graph.

Districts Providing Case Management Services



For more information on school nurse case management of chronic health conditions in schools please see https://publichealth.nc.gov/wch/cy/schoolnurses/chronic.htm.

Summary

School nursing services are one component of a local School Health Program. By working with multiple partners in health and education, including the NC Division of Public Health, NC Division of Health Benefits, NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Pediatric Society, NC Academy of Family Physicians, NC Dental Society, Prevent Blindness NC, NC School and Community Health Alliance, local health departments, and more, school nurses are working to help students achieve at levels they might not otherwise reach. In many school health areas North Carolina can serve as a model for school health programs. In others, services are limited as a result of relatively slow growth in the number of school nurse positions in relation to student population growth and complexity of health care needs. Working towards an increase in the number of school nurses in North Carolina could positively impact overall student health and well-being, resulting in improved student attendance and successful academic outcomes.

Want more information about school health services and school nursing?

Please visit the on-line North Carolina School Nursing Support webpage.

This data represents key information shared by NC School Nurses via the Annual School Health Report Surveys. The information is based on students known to school nurses who received health related services in NC public schools. It is not intended as surveillance data. Except where indicated the data does not include students in NC public charter schools. Additional data is collected and is available upon request.

CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & DATA REQUESTS:
Jenifer.Simone@dhhs.nc.gov • Carol.Tyson@dhhs.nc.gov

NC Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Public Health
www.ncdhhs.gov • https://publichealth.nc.gov/wch/stats/
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North Carolina Annual School Health Services Report Brochure

2020-2021

North Carolina School Health Nurses

Keeping Students in Class and Ready to Learn

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public Health

NORTH CAROLINA Healthy Schools

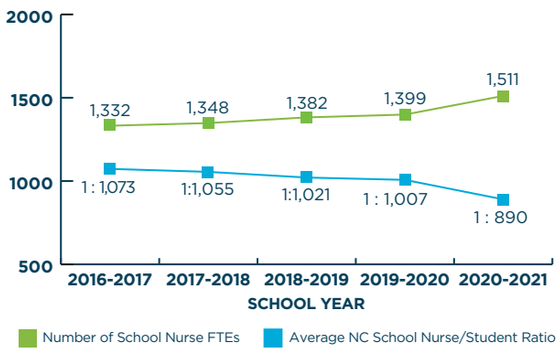
The North Carolina Annual School Health Services Report Survey began with the 1996/97 school year and has enjoyed 100% participation from all public-school districts since its inception. The survey purpose has remained the same as shared in 1996:

- To describe current school health services which demonstrate the scope and complexity of health needs in the school environment.
- To identify school health service needs in local communities and regions, and state trends.
- To clarify the school nurse role as the professional health services coordinator and provider within the school health program.
- To provide relevant data to assist local and state school health program managers and policy makers.

This report brochure reflects data collection limitations resulting from an inability to collect complete health services data due to the demands of response to COVID 19.

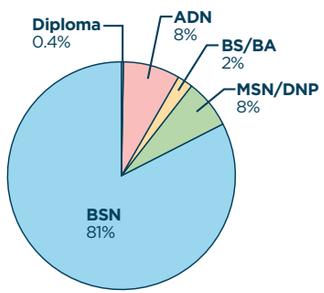
School Nurse Profile

School Nurse Staffing and Nurse-to-Student Ratios



School Nurse Educational Preparation

School nurses are Registered Nurses (RN) with varied educational preparation. In addition to being an RN, national certification in school nursing is the standard by which North Carolina school nurses are assured to have the advanced knowledge and skills required in this independent specialty practice. A baccalaureate in nursing science (BSN) is the minimum degree required for certification eligibility. At the close of the 2020-2021 school year 57% of the total number of school nurses were nationally certified. NC school nurse degree status is indicated in the following graph.



NC Public Charter Schools that Employ a School Nurse

While NC LEA (Local Education Agency) schools are required to routinely provide the services of an RN School Nurse to assess and plan for the health needs of students, public charter schools less frequently employ a school nurse. During the 2020-21 year 24% of public charter schools reported employing a school nurse, full- or part-time.

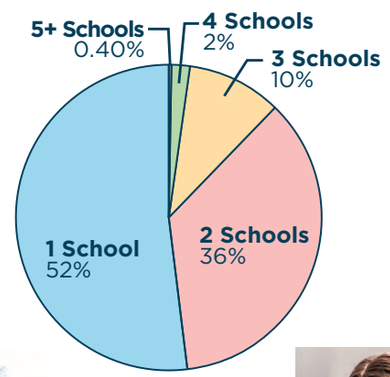
Common School Nurse Activities and COVID-19

The 2020-2021 school year for school nurses was largely dedicated to COVID-19 mitigation and response efforts. As a result, traditional nursing activities directed to reducing health related barriers to education were much less frequently addressed. While school nursing position numbers grew during this school year, those positions were largely supported through temporary COVID-related funds and sometimes difficult to fill during the pandemic. Any sustainable impact on school nurse ratios and FTEs will require a permanent funding response. Competition for nursing staff across employers is reflected in a final position vacancy rate for school nurses of 7.3%, up from the normal range of 4.6 to 4.7%.

NC School Nurse School Assignments and Employers

Nursing time and services provided are dependent on number of schools assigned.

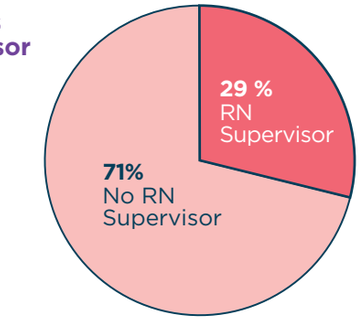
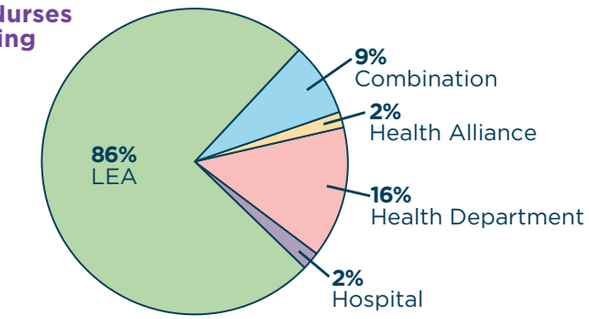
Percent of School Nurses that Serve 1-5 Schools



North Carolina school nurses often function as a team without the benefit of a supervisor who is a Registered Nurse (RN).

School nurses may be directly employed through the LEA or contracted through another agency.

Percent of Nurse Employers that Provide an RN Supervisor



Percent of Nurses by Supervising Agency