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Purpose of the *School Health Administrative Guidelines*

These guidelines have been developed through the leadership and funding of the Florida Department of Health (DOH). Content decisions were made by a workgroup composed of school health staff from both the DOH and Department of Education (DOE), at local and state levels. The intent of this document is to provide a reference point and policy guidance on common school health issues for school health administrators in Florida. Florida Statute and Administrative Rule requirements are referenced through out this document. While the “Florida School Health Administrative Guidelines” is not a revision of HRSM 150-25 “School Health Services” (which is obsolete), the essential elements contained within HRSM 150-25 have been included and updated.

School Health Mission Statement

The mission of Florida's school health services program is to appraise, protect and promote the health of students.

Summary of School Health Services

School-based health services are provided to public school children in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve in all 67 Florida counties. Services are provided in accordance with a local *School Health Services Plan* jointly developed by the county health department, school district, school health advisory committee, and public/private partners. Health services are provided to public charter schools, based upon local contracts and agreements. Counties offer school health services to private schools, based upon their participation in the *School Health Services Plan*, staff availability and need.

School health services are an important component of the public health system and help assure that Florida's students are healthy, in the classroom, and ready to learn. School health services supplement, rather than replace, parental responsibility and encourage parents' attention to student health. The program is designed to encourage parental awareness of students' health status; discover and prevent health problems; and encourage utilization of the services provided by physicians, dentists and other community health agencies. School health services promote student health through prevention, early intervention, and referral for treatment of acute or chronic health problems. During the school year, children spend many of their waking hours at school. School health services enable students to attend school in a safe learning environment.

Key Components in the Development of an Effective School Health Program

An effective school health program in Florida must be developed and monitored jointly by the county health department and the local education agency. Statutory requirements must be addressed, as well as local problems, needs, strengths and availability of services.

Interdisciplinary collaboration, sound policies, and guidelines for program evaluation must exist. Consideration must be given to input from school health staff, school district and individual school administrators, instructional and paraprofessional staff, parents, and community members. Staffing patterns and funding must be adequate to address the identified needs and mandated services. School health personnel must be well-qualified and have clear role definitions.

Administrative Responsibility for School Health

The Florida Department of Health has statutory responsibility, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Education, for supervising the administration of the school health services program and performing periodic program reviews. Funding may come from a variety of sources, including the Florida Department of Health, local school districts, health care districts and public/private community partners.

Summary of Statutory Program Requirements

Core program requirements, addressed in the *School Health Services Plan* include: health appraisal, records review, nurse assessment, preventive dental program, vision screening, hearing screening, scoliosis screening, growth and development screening, health counseling, referral and follow up of suspected or confirmed health problems, meeting emergency needs in each school, medication administration and medical procedures, prevention of communicable diseases, health education curriculum development, referral of students to appropriate health treatment, consultation with students' parent/guardian regarding need for health attention by an appropriate provider, and maintenance of appropriate records ([s. 381.0056, F.S.](#)).

Florida School Health History

Prior to 1974, school health services were generally conducted by county health departments and school districts based on local priorities, standards, and sources of revenue. Services varied from programs providing communicable disease surveillance and immunizations to comprehensive programs utilizing screening technicians, health aides, nurses, physicians, and volunteers. The "Timeline of Major School Health Services Program Highlights", developed by the Florida Department of Health summarizes historical events by fiscal year (see Appendix J).

Florida School Health Organizations

Professional organizations serve to provide networking and educational opportunities for their members, as well as giving individuals an appropriate venue to solicit change and continuity in the area of school health. Organizations that provide the primary voice for school health in Florida are the following:

- The Florida Association of School Nurses (FASN) is a unified affiliate of the National Association of School Nurses. FASN is the only professional organization in Florida that exclusively represents the interests and goals of professional school nurses. The FASN Newsletter, *FASNating News* is published periodically throughout the year. See [Appendix A](#) for the Internet link.
- The Florida School Health Association (FSHA) is a multidisciplinary organization whose purpose is to promote a comprehensive and coordinated approach resulting in improved school health programs in Florida. FSHA supports health services, health education, training for school health nurses, and public-private partnerships. The FSHA newsletter, *Networking*, is published quarterly, and addresses legislative concerns and other topics important to school health. See [Appendix A](#) for the Internet link.
- The Florida Public Health Association (FPHA) seeks to advance public health by advocacy, education, and networking. FPHA newsletters are published quarterly. Several of its sections address issues relevant to school health professionals. See [Appendix A](#) for the Internet link.

National School Health Organizations

National professional organizations serve to provide networking and educational opportunities on a broader scale for their members, as well as giving individuals an appropriate venue to solicit change and continuity in the area of school health. Organizations that provide the primary voice for school health nationally are the following:

- The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) has corporate headquarters in Maryland. Publications include the *Journal of School Nursing* and the *NASN Newsletter*. NASN provides legislative advocacy, qualified staff, and a wide range of topical publications available for purchase. Membership in NASN is linked to membership in the state affiliate organization. See [Appendix A](#) for the Internet link.
- The American School Health Association (ASHA) is a multidisciplinary organization of administrators, counselors, health educators, physical educators, psychologists, school health coordinators, school nurses, school physicians, and social workers. Major publications of ASHA include the *Journal of School Health* and *Health in Action*. See [Appendix A](#) for the Internet link.
- The American Public Health Association (APHA) influences policies and sets priorities in public health. Throughout its history it has been in the forefront of numerous efforts to prevent disease and promote health. APHA is the oldest and largest organization of public health professionals in the world. The publications: *American Journal of Public Health* and *The Nations Health* monthly newsletter are available to members. See [Appendix A](#) for the Internet link.

