



# SCHOOL NURSE UPDATE

[www.dhss.mo.gov/SchoolHealth/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/SchoolHealth/)

**School Nurses**  
THE HEART OF SCHOOL  
HEALTH SERVICES

**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services**

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**Date May 2008**

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SAVE THE DATE



### **National Vision Month**

May has been designated as Healthy Vision Month. This is a national eye health observance prompted by the Healthy People 2010. The Vision Objective (29-9) is to increase the use of personal protective eyewear in recreational activities and hazardous situations around the home. The National Eye Institute developed a number of resources that would be useful in educating parents and students about the importance of eye protection. There are materials for students that would be useful in doing prescreening education about preserving vision, as well as fun activities for students. There are other materials which could be adapted for health related columns in school newsletters, a power point presentation with script, specific for coaches regarding eye safety in sports activities, and information to share with school health advisory councils. The website to access the materials is [www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm/tools.asp](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm/tools.asp)

### **Prescription Substance Abuse Education Program**

The media is full of information about the alarming increase in the abuse of prescription drugs among young people. These drugs are more easily obtained than illegal drugs. The National Association of School Nurses, in collaboration with PriCara™ (Division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.) is launching an education program titled: *Smart Moves, Smart Choices: A Prescription Drug Abuse Education Program*. The program was launched April 17 at Shawnee Mission High School in Kansas. Three other high schools will begin their program soon. The program involves the use of a series of five videos that cover a variety of topics to educate students and parents about this problem. More than 2 million students, ages 12-17 reported abusing prescription drugs in 2006. To access the videos, which are produced by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions, go to [www.macneil-lehrer.com/thenews/themedic](http://www.macneil-lehrer.com/thenews/themedic)

### **Pandemic Flu Preparedness**

Most materials related to pandemic flu found on the web are geared for adults. The American Public Health Association has developed a web page that includes materials for students of all ages, with engaging activities and games to educate them about pandemic flu, materials to share with parents, and opportunities for students to provide some leadership in their families in preparing for the possibility of a pandemic flu. The website for these materials is [www.getreadyforflu.org/kids](http://www.getreadyforflu.org/kids).



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## **CDC Web Resource on Autism**

CDC recently sponsored a teleconference on autism, which highlighted an initiative titled: *Learn the Signs: Act Early*. The mission of the initiative is that every child reach his or her full potential. Early research has shown that less than one-third (27%) of health care providers believed their colleagues are well-informed about developmental disorders, 42% did not know autism could be diagnosed as early as 18 months, and that 59% said they did not have the resources needed to educate parents. Research also learned that parents lacked knowledge about cognitive, emotional, social development and developmental delays.

The partners in this initiative, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Autism Society of America recommend efforts to communicate the urgency of “acting early” when there is a concern about developmental delay. There is a clear consensus to avoid language such as “autism” and “autism spectrum disorder” (ASD) in materials designed to teach all parents of young children.

The objectives of this campaign are to 1) increase AWARENESS of developmental milestones and early warning signs, 2) increase KNOWLEDGE of the benefits of early action and early intervention, 3) increase parent-provider DIALOGUE on the topic of developmental milestones and disorders, and 4) increase EARLY ACTION on childhood developmental disorders. The target audience includes all health care providers, including nurses, parents of young children and early childhood educators.

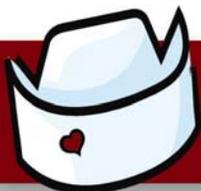
Materials on the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign can be downloaded at [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly) or a kit may be ordered and sent to you. There are three kits: Health Care Professional Resource kit (fact sheets, information cards, small posters, etc.), a Parent Resource kit (fact sheets, information cards, growth/milestones chart), and Early Educators Resource kit (CD-ROM with fact sheets and tips for talking with parents, flyers, posters, and growth/milestones chart. All kits are recommended for use with all parents, and stress healthy developmental stages.

## **Nurse to Student Ratios**

Missouri has much to be proud of when it comes to the statewide nurse-to-student ratio. A Healthy People 2010 (soon to be here) objective calls for a nurse-to-student ratio of one nurse to each 750 students in our nation’s schools. In Missouri, thanks to the state funding we have received since 1995, Missouri’s statewide ratio is 1:558, if we count both our RNs and LPNs working in schools. The National Association of School Nurses count the ratio of RNs only, but again Missouri’s ratio of RNs to students is 1:732. It is hoped that in Healthy People 2020 objectives now being formulated, there will be an objective to move the recommended ratio even lower. All school nurses would agree that 1:750 is still too high, and probably should be at least less than 1:500 students, since we have such a mix of students with special health care needs in our regular education classes.

## **2008 Maternal Child Health Institute**

We previously suggested putting this date on your calendar for this conference. The conference will be held on June 4-5, 2008, at the Holiday Inn Select Executive Center in Columbia. School nurses have attended the Maternal Child Health Institute in the past, and found it a very worthwhile meeting. The title of the 2008 conference is “*Bringing Together Communities to Address Injury, Obesity and Tobacco Prevention*”. The focus will be on building collaborative efforts between schools, public health agencies and community partners to address these three problems that impact the health of Missourians. Evidence-based interventions will be highlighted. A registration form is available at [www.mopha.org](http://www.mopha.org). The cost of the conference is \$50 per day, or \$75 for the two-days conference. The registration deadline is May 21, 2008.



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## **Conflict of Interest Issues**

School nurses must always be aware of conflict of interest issues in schools. There are specific laws regarding referrals to professionals that require the school to provide parents with a list of providers rather than directing them to one particular type of professional, or even one specific professional. When local professionals come into schools to provide screenings of some type, there is always a question of a conflict of interest when referrals are made. For example, this issue comes up when one health plan comes into a school to make a presentation and provide materials, when there are several health plans in the area. To avoid this becoming an issue, the nurse should discuss this with school administration before agreeing to have a group come into a school setting.

## **Fluoride Applications in Schools**

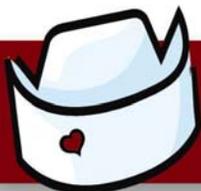
Schools have traditionally offered fluoride rinse programs to students in elementary grades, as a preventive measure to reduce dental decay. Now studies have shown that dental varnish, which is less labor-intensive, is showing more efficacy than even our fluoride “swish and spit” programs that have been so effective in reducing dental decay. There is a plan to phase out Department of Health and Senior Services support for the fluoride rinse programs in schools by 2011. Efforts are underway to develop the resources to be able to offer fluoride varnish programs, where dental health professionals screen students and oversee the application of fluoride varnish to certain populations of students, applied twice a year for two years, to more schools. School nurses and volunteers can be trained to apply the varnish following the professional screening. This will free up staff and class time now spent in the fluoride rinse programs. Schools will be kept advised of how this program is evolving. For information regarding dental varnish programs, you can visit the following website: [www.mohealthysmiles.com](http://www.mohealthysmiles.com)

## **Cerner Health Conference**

Last year, fifty school nurses were fortunate to be able to attend the Cerner Corporation’s Health Conference. Cerner Corporation is sponsor of the First Hand Foundation. Cerner developed a “school nurse track” for the 2007 conference and offered many exciting topics. The conference is an opportunity to network with nurses working in various healthcare venues, as well as to obtain up-to-date clinical information on areas of concern for school nurses. Topics under consideration are diabetes management, vaccine update, and management of seizures including new treatments and medications. The 2008 Conference will be held on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, at the Bartle Hall Convention Center in Kansas City. The cost for the two-day conference is \$75, and includes meals during the conference day and the conference information packet. If you are interested in attending, please contact Brie Cantrell, Program Manager, for information on how to reserve your seat for the conference, and for questions regarding lodging in the area, travel, or other conference questions. Brie Cantrell’s email address is [brie.Cantrell@cerner.com](mailto:brie.Cantrell@cerner.com)

## **Administrative Case Management**

Schools that have been participating in Medicaid reimbursement for “administrative claiming” for outreach activities to increase participation in Medicaid-sponsored programs, will be interested to know that there is an effort in Congress to prevent the elimination of school-based Medicaid claiming, scheduled to end June 20, 2007. The resolution, HR5163, is titled Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008. It is expected that a similar version will be introduced in the Senate in April.



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## Suicide Prevention Program

It is not news to school nurses that 1 out of 8 teens suffer from clinical depression. More adolescents, age 15-19, die from suicide than from the top 8 medical causes of death combined. It's estimated that in each Missouri high school classroom, 3 students have attempted suicide in the past year. Yet early-onset depression is one of the lowest-funded and researched medical illnesses.

The parents of Chad McCord created a not-for-profit organization to educate the community on the warning signs of teen depression, to raise funds for early-onset depression research, and to prevent the senseless loss of young lives to suicide. CHADS Coalition for Mental Health is sponsoring a fund-raising event in the St. Louis area, in which over 1000 area families and teens hope to raise \$100,000 for education and research to prevent adolescent depression and suicide. The KIDS WALKING FOR KIDS fundraising campaign is occurring in the St. Louis area. The campaign will conclude with a celebration at Creve Coeur Park on May 10<sup>th</sup>. For more details, call Lori Rasmussen, WALKING FOR KIDS Co-Chair, at 314-703.4743. In addition, the parents of Chad, Larry or Marian McCord would be honored to speak at any appropriate venues on the program of Signs of Suicide (SOS), as they hope to take their message state-wide. The Coalition recently received a grant from Anthem Blue Cross-Blue Shield to further their work on suicide prevention. The CHADS organization can be reached at [lorirasmussen@yahoo.com](mailto:lorirasmussen@yahoo.com)

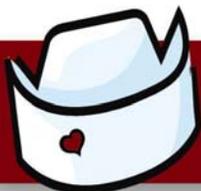
## Mental Health Resources

One of our school nurses working in southwest Missouri, where the residents have had to cope with flooding, reminded us that the Department of Mental Health has a resource on coping for families affected by flooding. Since most of central and southern Missouri has faced this issue, perhaps it would be useful for many other school nurses. In addition to age-appropriate fact sheets on coping, psychological first aid for children from toddlers to adolescents, the website has a link to the DMH Access Crisis Line for those residents in need of immediate mental health assistance. The website is [www.dmh.mo.gov/diroffice/disaster/disaster.htm](http://www.dmh.mo.gov/diroffice/disaster/disaster.htm)

This nurse also sent a resource addressing the issue of bullying. In the news recently, we have seen a number of problems caused by students using electronic media, such as internet postings, text messaging, etc. to harass or bully other students. The December 2007 *Journal of Adolescent Health* is dedicated to cyberbullying, and one article focuses on the responsibility of the school administration. Certainly, the majority of cyberbullying is likely to be generated at home, but it creates school safety issues when the students are physically together at school. The website for these articles is [www.jahonline.org/content/suppl07](http://www.jahonline.org/content/suppl07)

## Pertussis Web Conference

The Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Immunizations Assessment and Awareness, is sponsoring a web conference entitled: Understanding and Reducing the Risk of Pertussis Disease in Adolescents. The program will be presented by Dr. Daryl Lynch, an adolescent medicine specialist at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, and consultant to our DHSS Adolescent Health Program. The objectives of this program are to: review pertussis disease epidemiology, review recommendations to prevent pertussis in the adolescent, and to review recommendations for adolescent immunizations. **The date is May 7, 12 noon to 1:30 pm.** To register for the web conference, **RSVP by May 2**, to [Jennifer.paulk@dhss.mo.gov](mailto:Jennifer.paulk@dhss.mo.gov) or [heather.keitges@sanofipasteur.com](mailto:heather.keitges@sanofipasteur.com). The RSVP is important as space is limited on the web conference. To hear the audio portion of the conference, the dial-in number is 888-423-3280, and for the visual web access, the site is [www.webmeeting.att.com](http://www.webmeeting.att.com) and the meeting number is 8664845341, and the code is 783161. You must log on 10 minutes prior to the session in order to download client software.



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## **Sickle Cell Disease Resources**

School nurses who are familiar with the various DVDs produced by MSBA on health topics, such as asthma, diabetes, and seizure disorders will be pleased to know that another high-quality staff education resource is available dealing with sickle cell disease. We know there are many students with sickle cell disease in our schools. These students are not found just in urban areas. In fact, the video was produced in a very small school district in central Missouri. Much of the dialogue in the video comes from a student with sickle cell disease, and she talks directly about her school experience. In addition to the DVD, a booklet is available that reinforces the information in the DVD, and can be used for staff education. If you have a student with sickle cell disease in your school, you are encouraged to call for a copy of the DVD and booklet. The information is structured around the coordinated school health model and addresses what various members of the school team need to know in order for these students to be safe and successful at school. A copy of the video can be obtained by e-mail to [laura.lewis@dhss.mo.gov](mailto:laura.lewis@dhss.mo.gov) or by calling Laura at 573-526-5350.

## **Marketing Asthma Friendly Schools Webinar**

The CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health, has produced a professional development webinar, *Marketing Asthma-Friendly Schools*, to air on **Tuesday, May 20th from 3-4pm Eastern Daylight Time**. It will highlight a new CDC toolkit, *Initiating Change: Creating an Asthma-Friendly School*, which was developed to help asthma champions at the district and school levels persuade people in their schools and communities of the importance of asthma-friendly schools. The cornerstone of the toolkit is a 13-minute, inspirational video on *Creating an Asthma-Friendly School*, which features real-life success stories of students who, thanks to their schools' implementation of asthma-friendly policies and programs, now have their asthma under control.

After attending the webinar training, participants will be able to: \

- \* Identify the purpose of the *Creating an Asthma-Friendly School* video.
- \* List two uses for the video in their work.
- \* Identify the purpose of the *Initiating Change: Creating an Asthma-Friendly School* toolkit.

Click the following link to register for the event and click the "enroll" tab within that window:

<https://kessjones-ls.webex.com/kessjones-ls/onstage/g.php?d=667842042&t=a>

Once you have registered, you will receive an e-mail message confirming your enrollment and providing procedural information to join the event.

Both the presentation and its accompanying audio will be streamed to your PC. You will not need to dial in to hear the audio as you have with previous webinars. For questions about registering for or accessing the webinar, please contact WebEx Technical Support at 1-866-779-3239 or (916) 463-8262. For other questions about the webinar, please contact Gus Nelson at [gnelson@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:gnelson@access.k12.wv.us).

## **Recreational Water Illness - Stay Healthy While Swimming This Summer**

Very soon thousands of Missourians will flock to their favorite swimming areas to stay cool and have fun. But many don't know that something else can be swimming around in the water with them: germs that can make people sick. Germs that can cause recreational water illness (RWI) can be found in swimming pools, water/spray parks, lakes, and the ocean. Some germs can even live for days in well-maintained pools treated with chlorine. To stay healthy while swimming this summer, learn how to protect yourself, your family and others from RWIs.



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## Healthy Swimming Habits

- ❑ Don't swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for kids in diapers. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
- ❑ Avoid getting water in your mouth and don't swallow the water you swim in.
- ❑ Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
- ❑ Take young kids on bathroom breaks or change diapers often.
- ❑ Change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and spread illness.
- ❑ Wash your young child thoroughly (especially the bottom) with soap and water before swimming to ensure invisible particles of fecal matter don't end up in the pool.

For more information on RWIs, contact your local public health agency, or access the following websites: [www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/tools.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/tools.htm); [www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/rwi\\_prevention\\_week.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/rwi_prevention_week.htm); and [www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/).

## Effective Prevention During Missouri Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month

Easy, effective prevention is the key message the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is sending to Missourians during Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month. The Governor recently signed a proclamation naming May 2008 as Missouri Tick-borne Disease Awareness Month to emphasize and underscore the risk of tick-borne disease and the importance of prevention. Experts predict this spring and summer there will be especially high numbers of ticks and fleas, probably due to weather conditions this spring.

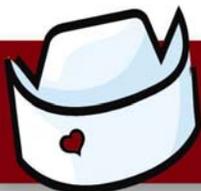
Missouri ticks can carry a variety of microorganisms that can cause serious or even deadly disease. While not all ticks carry these microorganisms, and not all tick bites lead to illness, learning and following simple but effective prevention measures is the best way to avoid tick bites that could lead to illness.

A common misconception about ticks is that they are only found out in the countryside in deep woods, pastures, or thick brush. However, ticks are probably closer than most people think and can be found in the yard of an average home, as well as in bushes and leaf litter around the property. This makes it important for anyone spending time outdoors to learn how to prevent tick bites, especially families with children who play outside.

Though tick-borne diseases can become serious if left untreated, there is no reason for people to dramatically change their lifestyles or panic if they find a tick attached to themselves or their child. By following some very easy but effective prevention measures, people can protect themselves against tick-borne disease and enjoy Missouri's outdoors through the warm weather months.

## Tick Bite Prevention Basics

- **Reduce tick habitat around the home and avoid heavy brush and tall grass elsewhere** – keep the lawn cut short and cut back tall grass and brush from around the property. When enjoying the outdoors, stay to the center of trails and avoid walking through tall grass or brush.
- **Keep ticks off your skin** – before spending time outdoors, apply a repellent that contains 20 – 50 percent DEET, and read the label to make sure you are using it correctly. The American Academy of Pediatrics



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recommends using repellents containing a concentration of 30% DEET or less on children over 2 months old. Wear long sleeved shirts tucked into pants, and tuck pants into your socks or boots.

- **Perform tick checks** – After being outdoors, even in your own yard, check yourself, children and other family members every two to three hours for ticks. Look at their clothes and run your fingers over scalp and skin, looking for small bumps or new “moles”, and check hair, ears, and underarms. At night, before bathing and bed, use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body.
- **Promptly remove attached ticks** – Using a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick by the head or mouthparts right where they enter the skin. DO NOT grasp the tick by the body. Without jerking, pull firmly and steadily directly outward. DO NOT twist the tick out or apply petroleum jelly, a hot match, dish soap, or any other irritant to the tick in an attempt to get it to back out. Place the tick in a small container of alcohol to kill it and later discard in the trash. Clean the bite wound with soap and water and apply a commercial topical antiseptic. If a portion of the mouthparts of the tick remains embedded in the skin, it is not necessary to “dig” it out, cleansing and disinfecting of the tick bite site is all that is recommended.

For more information about ticks and tick-borne disease, go to: [www.dhss.mo.gov/TicksCarryDisease/](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/TicksCarryDisease/).

## Physical Activity in Schools

In 2007, the University of Missouri Columbia, and the Columbia Public Schools collaborated to produce a DVD on physical activity. These DVDs can be used in classrooms and gyms to get kids “*MOOVIN and GROOVIN*”. There is also a segment called “*Takin It Slow*” that can be used with school staff to get them also “moovin and groovin”. School nurses who have these DVDs have found them very useful in increasing the amount of physical activity outside of PE classes. If you would be interested in having some copies of this DVD, you can e-mail your request to [Robyn.Siebeneck@dhss.mo.gov](mailto:Robyn.Siebeneck@dhss.mo.gov) We will distribute them until our supply runs out.

## Adolescent Issues

The *Adolescent Shorts* Newsletter, along with other adolescent health related publications, is available through the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) website at <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/AdolescentHealth/Publications.html>. The latest issue is titled “**Acne: Pathogenesis, Treatment Options, and Tips for Educating Patients.**” *Adolescent Shorts* is a bi-monthly newsletter co-published by the DHSS Adolescent Health Program and The Children’s Mercy Hospital. The newsletter addresses current issues and promotes best practices in adolescent health care. For more information on *Adolescent Shorts*, contact Patti Van Tuinen, at 573-751-6188, [Patti.VanTuinen@dhss.mo.gov](mailto:Patti.VanTuinen@dhss.mo.gov).

## SAVE THE DATE:

The 2008 Coordinated School Health Conference will be held December 4-6, at the Lodge of the Four Seasons, at Lake Ozark, Missouri. The conference theme is “School Health: Educating the Whole Child”. Additional information and registration information can be accessed soon at [www.healthykidsmo.org](http://www.healthykidsmo.org)