



Massachusetts
School Nurse Organization, Inc.

Governor Charlie Baker
Massachusetts State House, Beacon St #280
Boston, MA 02133

April 17, 2020

Dear Governor Baker,

The MA School Nurse Organization (MSNO) urges our State Leadership to appoint a MA School Nurse Leader to provide expertise as the state prepares to reopen schools during the COVID-19 public health crisis. On the local level, MSNO strongly recommends that Superintendents and administrative teams, in collaboration with local boards/departments of health, include MA School Nurses as active participants in the COVID-19 school reentry planning process.

Rationale

- MA School Nurses are professional Registered Nurses licensed by the Massachusetts Board of Nursing and, if working in public schools, licensed by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- MA School Nurses are uniquely qualified to manage the health and safety of the entire school community.¹
- MA School Nurses routinely coordinate and provide care for students with special health care needs.
- Children and adolescents (PreK - 12) with special health care needs comprise 25% of the student population² and are at increased risk of COVID-19 complications.
- MA School Nurses are experienced in population-based health, including illness surveillance.
- Consistent guidelines are needed to ensure the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors in school buildings that include:
 - Adequate Nurse Staffing: screening and triaging students, staff, and visitors with COVID-19 symptoms
 - Attendance: return to school (students, staff, visitors)
 - Medications: use of nebulizers, fever-reducers
 - Physical distancing & general population use of face masks
 - Resources & budget: personal protective equipment, thermometers (donated to hospitals, first responders)
 - Screening: universal for community; targeted for those who feel ill
 - Space: private isolation room
 - Vulnerable populations: anyone with underlying health conditions; >60 years of age
- Schools are workplaces and should be subject to at least similar measures required by other essential MA business that are permitted to re-open.

- School re-opening will be safer for communities if adequate time is provided to ensure measures and resources are in place before students, staff and visitors return to school buildings.

On behalf of the MSNO Board of Directors, thank you for your consideration,



Jenny Gormley, DNP, MSN, BA, RN, NCSN
president@msno.org

¹National Association of School Nurses

<https://www.nasn.org/advocacy/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-role>

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017). Research Brief: Addressing the Needs of Students with Chronic Health Conditions: Strategies for Schools.

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/chronic_conditions/pdfs/2017_02_15-How-Schools-Can-Students-with-CHC_Final_508.pdf

Cc: Marylou Sudders, Secretary
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Monica Bharel, Commissioner
Jill Clark, Director, Division of Child/Adolescent Health
Karen Robitaille, Director School Health Services
MA Department of Health

Jeffrey Riley, Commissioner
Anne Gilligan, Safe & Healthy Schools Coordinator
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Thomas Scott, Executive Director
Christine McGrath, Director of Operations
Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Glen Koocher, Executive Director
Massachusetts Association of School Committees

Cathleen Hagerty, Executive Director
MA Chapter American Academy Pediatrics

Ruth Mori, President
MA Association of Public Health Nurses

Julie Cronin, President
American Nurses Association Massachusetts

Julie Pinkham, Executive Director
Donna Kelly-Williams, President
Massachusetts Nurses Association

Amanda Stefancyk Oberlies, Chief Executive Officer
Organization of Nurse Leaders