Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Massachusetts School Nurses

MSNO Members
Demographics and Survey Information
The survey was open from June 15, 2020 until June 30, 2020

847 responses were recorded, 788 completed enough of the survey to be used as part of the analysis. 483 of respondents (65.4%) are members of the Massachusetts School Nurses Organization. Only MSNO members were included in the analysis shown in this document.

For the purposes of this analysis, Massachusetts counties have been grouped into these categories:
- MetroWest: Essex, Middlesex, and Norfolk (N=246)
- Southeastern: Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, and Plymouth (N=93)
- West: Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Worcester (N=114)
- Suffolk (N=25)
Demographics: Job Status

Job Status Prior to the Start of the Covid-19 Pandemic

- I worked full-time as a school nurse: 82.2%
- I was working in school administration: 7.3%
- I worked part-time as a school nurse: 4.6%
- I retired before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic: 2.1%
- Other: 3.9%

N = 482. The most common “Other” responses were dual roles as a nurse and administrator/Nurse Leader and retired nurses who substitute.

- Members of the MSNO were more likely to be working in school administration compared with the overall survey population (7.3% versus 5.7%).
- Members of the MSNO were less likely to be working part-time compared with the overall survey population (4.6% versus 8.1%).
Nurses in the MSNO have worked more years on average compared with the overall population, with 79.5% working more than 5 years.

N = 460. Retired nurses who were not working as substitute nurses and those who were unemployed prior to the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis were not included.
Demographics: County and District Environment

Percent of Respondents by County

- Middlesex: 26.8%
- Worcester: 14.6%
- Norfolk: 13.0%
- Essex: 11.7%
- Plymouth: 9.8%
- Hampden: 5.9%
- Bristol: 5.9%
- Suffolk: 5.2%
- Barnstable: 3.3%
- Berkshire: 1.5%
- Franklin: 1.5%
- Hampshire: 0.4%
- Dukes: 0.2%
- Nantucket: 0.2%

Percent of Respondents by Environment

- Suburban: 66.3%
- Urban: 21.9%
- Rural: 11.8%

N = 457
Demographics: School Environment

Percent of Respondents Working in Public, Private, or Charter Schools

- Public: 85.8%
- Private Day: 6.6%
- Charter: 3.5%
- Private Residential: 2.2%
- Other: 2.0%

Percent of Respondents Working in Each Grade Level

- Pre-School and/or Elementary: 65.7%
- Middle School: 43.7%
- High School: 40.2%

N = 458. The most common “Other” response was Collaborative school.

N = 458. Approximately 35% of respondents indicated they worked for more than one grade level.
Demographics: Age and Gender

**Age Distribution**
- 26 - 35: 5.2%
- 36 - 45: 11.5%
- 46 - 55: 30.8%
- 56 - 65: 42.7%
- 66+: 6.3%
- I prefer not to answer: 3.6%

**Gender Distribution**
- Female: 97.7%
- Male: 0.4%
- All others: 0.2%
- I prefer not to answer: 1.7%

N = 478
Demographics: Race and Ethnicity

### Race

- **Asian**: 0.8%
- **Black**: 0.6%
- **Multi-racial**: 0.6%
- **White**: 93.1%
- **Other (please specify)**: 0.2%
- **I prefer not to answer**: 4.6%

**N = 478**

### Hispanic

- **No**: 95.0%
- **I prefer not to answer**: 4.4%
- **Yes**: 0.6%

**N = 478**
The Effect of Covid-19 on Job Security and Retirement
A slightly lower percentage of MSNO nurses stated they had been laid off as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic compared with the overall survey population (2.7% and 3.6%, respectively).
Nurses in the MSNO reported a similar rate of furlough due to Covid-19 as the overall survey population.
Effect on Retirement Benefits

Have Your Retirement Benefits in the MTRS Been Affected Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic?

- Two percent of nurses in the MSNO indicated they felt their benefits in the MTRS would be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, similar to the percentage seen in the overall survey population.

- Nurses in the MSNO were less likely to express uncertainty about the effect of Covid-19 on their retirement, with only 43% answering “I don’t know”, compared to 47.5% in the overall population.

N = 405. Forty-eight respondents selected N/A.
The Role of School Nurses During Distance Learning
Surveyed members of the MSNO had a similar distribution of distance learning activities compared to the overall survey population. MSNO nurses were slightly more likely to be involved in their community’s contact tracing efforts (45.9% versus 41.5%).

N = 434. Common responses for “Other” included continuing with regular meetings, paperwork, and interactions, working with BoH/contact tracing, helping with reopening plans, and professional development.
Reasons School Nurses Have Been in Contact with Students and Parents During Distance Learning

There were no significant differences between the type of contact MSNO nurses had during distance learning compared with the overall survey population.

N = 434, The most common “other” responses included questions about immunizations, kindergarten registration, and paperwork for sports or summer school.
Similar to the response seen in the overall survey population, approximately one quarter of MSNO members had at least one student they were unable to continue monitoring during distance learning.

N = 434

Have There Been Students with Chronic Health Conditions Who You Wished to Continue Monitoring but Were Unable to Check On?

- Yes, 24.4%
- No, 75.6%

Why Were You Unable to Continue to Monitor the Student?

- I was directed by my administration to stop monitoring the student: 3.8%
- The parent/guardian requested I stop monitoring the student: 4.7%
- I was unable to contact the student or parent/guardian: 73.6%
- Other: 24.5%

N = 106. The most common “other” response was lack of follow up by parents/guardians.
Compared with the overall survey population, a slightly higher percentage of nurses in the MSNO indicated they had students whose safety they were concerned about due to their increased time at home (61.1% versus 56.1%).

**Are There Students You Are Concerned May Not Be Safe Due to Their Increased Time at Home?**
- Yes, 61.1%
- No, 38.9%

**Do You Feel You Have the Resources and Support You Need to Act on That Concern Should It Become Necessary?**
- Yes, 89.8%
- No, 10.2%
The Role of School Nurses During School Re-Opening Planning
Reasons School Nurses Have Considered Leaving Direct Care

- Only 17% of surveyed school nurses who are members of the MSNO indicated that they have considered leaving direct care nursing because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

N = 75. The most common “other” responses included displeasure about not being included in planning, concern about the health of their family, and the need to take care of their children or other family members.
### How School Nurses Have Been Involved in Re-Opening Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have met with other school nurses within the district to discuss re-opening plans</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have made recommendations to school and/or district administrators about re-opening plans</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worked/am working on establishing protocols for assessing students and staff for Covid-19...</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have routine meetings with school administrators about re-opening plans</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have served/am serving on a re-opening committee or working group for my school</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have served/am serving on a re-opening committee or working group for my district</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 296

- Nearly 68% of nurses who are members of the MSNO have been part of their community’s re-opening planning. Slightly more than 8% indicate that they did not believe re-opening planning had started.
Nurses’ Opinion on Ease of Implementation for Possible Re-Opening Guidelines

Surveyed nurses who were members of the MSNO expressed similar levels of concern for the difficulty in implementing safety protocols surrounding daily screening, PPE, and cleaning.

Overall, nurses indicate that daily temperature screenings and successful mask wearing among students will be among the most difficult guidelines to implement, should districts mandate these measures.
Nurses’ Opinion on Ease of Implementation for Possible Re-Opening Guidelines

Percent of Nurses Who Believe Re-Opening Guidelines Will Be Extremely or Somewhat Difficult – Social Distancing

- Maintaining safe social distance (6ft) between students in the classroom: 88.6%
- Reducing class sizes to 10 or less: 87.0%
- Minimizing the movement of students through the school: 79.3%
- Establishing a reasonable isolation room where students can be kept if they exhibit Covid-19 symptoms: 69.2%
- Temporary suspension of large group activities (cafeteria lunch, recess, school assemblies): 64.2%
- Continued distance learning options for vulnerable students: 46.0%

N = 439

• There were no significant differences in the opinions from members of the MSNO and the overall survey population regarding the ease of implementing social distancing measures in schools.