

**Caregiving:** As one of the nation's top children's hospitals, we offer some of the best medical and social services care through many types of providers.



Nurses in our Community Health School Nurse Program work with students, their parents, school staff and administration to address students' immediate health needs as well as issues impacting their overall wellness.

### **Expanded school nurse program has life-changing impact on students' health**

"I thought he'd die from an asthma attack." Chris Keim, a nurse from Children's Hospital of Wisconsin's Community Health School Nurse Program, shared the story of a third-grade student she worked with at Hopkins Lloyd Community School in Milwaukee. "He was to the point where his mother was calling 911 and going to the hospital to manage the asthma," said Keim. "Now, he has an understanding of what his medications are and what they're used for. He knows what to do and how to take his meds. He swims now – before he needed an inhaler after walking up the stairs."

Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases affecting Milwaukee's central city students. Unfortunately, many of these students and their parents don't know how to properly manage the disease. Keim's story illustrates how the Community Health School Nurse Program is working to address students' immediate health needs as well as issues impacting their overall wellness.

When students are in pain or not feeling well, they don't perform well in school, which can keep them from developing to their fullest potential. Children's Hospital provides one half-time and seven full-time registered nurses at designated Milwaukee Public

Schools at no charge to the schools. The nurses follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's coordinated school health model, which means they take an active role with the school staff and administration, students and parents. They attend to the community's immediate health needs and educate children and families about preventive care.

"We're taking a comprehensive look at the school environment and working in partnership with administrators, teachers, students and families to make changes that will impact overall health," said Sara Siedenburg, school health nurse manager, Children's Hospital.

Program nurses are trained in disease prevention. They provide direct care to students and screenings, including vision and hearing. For chronic illnesses – such as asthma, diabetes, seizures or sickle cell anemia – they monitor students' lifestyles and recommend ways to better manage their illnesses. The nurses also coordinate care with physicians, social workers and insurance companies.

In addition, the nurses work with Children's Hospital's Community Health Outreach Education staff to provide education on a variety of health topics, including:

- Anger management.
- Drugs and alcohol use prevention.
- Human growth and development.
- Hygiene.
- Nutrition.
- Stress.

"Because nurses now spend the entire day in one school, every school day, they have time to really work with families, building relationships and trust," said Siedenburg.

"Many of the kids have so many health issues that it's hard for them to learn," Keim said. "We have a responsibility to be an advocate for the kids. We want families to get the resources and the help they need."



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