



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

April 25, 2014

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: National School Nurse Day

May 7, 2014, is National School Nurse Day. Join the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) by celebrating National School Nurse Day as a way to foster a better understanding of the role of school nurses in the educational setting.

Today's children face more chronic health illnesses (e.g., asthma, diabetes, food allergies, etc.) than ever before. The knowledge, assessment skills, and judgment of licensed professional school nurses help ensure the provision of quality health care to children. School nurses take on a variety of roles every day. For many children, the school nurse is the only health professional they may have access to, except in emergencies. This becomes even more important as the prevalence of chronic social, emotional, and other health problems increase.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), asthma is the leading chronic illness among children and adolescents in the United States. On average, in a classroom of 30 children, about three are likely to have asthma. Further, childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years. Today, approximately one in every 400 children and adolescents has type 1 or type 2 diabetes. According to a study released in 2013 by the CDC, food allergies among children increased approximately 50 percent between 1997 and 2011. The CDC reports that food allergies are a growing food safety and public health concern that affect an estimated 4-6 percent of children in the United States. School nurses help develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Healthcare Plans for these students.

Division superintendents are encouraged to join the NASN and the Virginia Department of Education as we celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of school nurses across the Commonwealth and their efforts toward meeting the needs of today's students by improving the delivery of health care in our schools. We appreciate school nurses, who contribute to our local communities by helping students stay healthy, in school, and ready to learn. Resources for celebrating National School Nurse Day may be found at:

<http://www.nasn.org/AboutNASN/NationalSchoolNurseDay>.

Should you have questions, please contact Tia Campbell, school health specialist, at 804-786-8671 or e-mail at Tia.Campbell@doe.virginia.gov.

PIW/tbc

