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Testimony against proposed administrative code changes of Administrative Code 6A:16.2 Programs to Support Student Development

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As a school nurse educator and former school nurse I am concerned about the removal of the wording "full-time" equivalent from the section on the certified school nurse from Administrative Code 6A:16:2, Programs to Support Student Development.
There seems to be some confusion on the role of the certified school nurse (CSN) and that of a registered nurse (RN) in some of the testimony presented to this board by others, specifically special education schools. First, of all CSNs are registered nurses (RN) with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree, they take courses beyond their degree in school nursing (a minimum of 6 credits), public school law, Human and Intercultural Relations in Education, Curriculum and Instruction in Health Education, and they also do a practicum in school nursing and health teaching in a public school. All of the certified school nurses have worked in a hospital or community health setting before entering their school nurse certificate program. Many have worked in Intensive Care Units, Emergency Rooms, and Pediatrics. They enter the programs with a wealth of knowledge from their previous nursing experiences. We (school nurse educators) teach them the specialty of school nursing. Many CSN's go on to finish their master degrees in nursing, health education and community health.

What is the specialty of school nursing?
According to the National Association of School Nurses' (NASN) definition updated in 1999 today's school nurse "facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential heath problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self management, self advocacy, and learning" (NASN, 1999). In NJ, institutions offering school nursing certificates teach these principles in the course work required in accredited programs. All School Nurse Certificate Programs in NJ were reaccredited last year. All students applying must be **RNs** and hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university. They must also hold a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillators (AED) certificates and complete a NJ Department of Education DOE –approved college curriculum. This curriculum as mentioned before includes: a minimum of 6 credits in school nursing, including areas in school health services, physical assessments, organization and administration of the school heath program and as mentioned before a clinical experience in a school nurses office. Other areas covered in the program are:1) human growth and development 2) health assessment 3) fundamentals of substance abuse and dependency 4) special education and or learning disabilities5) methods of teaching health in grades preschool through grades 12 including curriculum development 6) public

health including such areas as public heath nursing, community health problems, and communicable disease control. A course in Human and Intercultural Relations which includes studies to develop understanding of social interaction and culture change, including courses such as urban sociology, history of minority groups, intergroup relations, and suburban and inner-city problems. Guidance and counseling is taught along with school law including legal aspects of school nursing. A student teaching practicum is also included.

Those who think RNs can do more medical care than school nurses are incorrect. In school nursing courses school nurse educators include topics such as care of the special needs child these include: diabetes, asthma, cystic fibrosis and many other medical conditions seen in school age children. We go over vision, auditory and scoliosis screenings and many other school nursing issues such as child abuse, bullying, childhood obesity and other issues that affect school age children.

It is difficult as a school nurse educator to cover all the areas that need to be taught for our certified school nurse to feel confident to take over a school nurse's office. Why would be expect an RN with none of this specialized courses to be able to practice independently as a school nurse? I know after finishing my certificate courses I still found it difficult to work in my first school nurse position. I often called colleagues and even my school nursing professor. I receive calls from my former students and school nurses from all over the state concerning legal issues and other areas of concerns. When I attend national conventions with school nurses and school nurse educators I know NJ holds the gold standard for school nursing in our nation. I think it would be a mistake to take that away from our children.