

January 27, 2025

Dear Chairman Cordelli and members of the House Education and Policy Administration Committee

My name is Pamela DiNapoli and I represent the NH School Nurses' Association and I am a school nurse in Manchester, NH. The School Nurses' Association strongly supports certification and supports legislation that makes certification accessible to nurses who are committed to practicing in schools. Relative to HB 208 we support the amended language while maintaining the highest standard of certification.

In 2016, the NH School Nurses' Association was contacted by Virginia Barry, then Commissioner of Education, about collaborating on a bill that would ensure the highest standard of practice in the school setting through creating of a school nurse certification with the Department of Education. In the school setting there is usually only has one medical professional in the building who needs to have enough knowledge and experience to make immediate, safe, and effective decisions that ensure that students get the emergency and medical help needed to stay safe and healthy. School nursing is a specialty field that requires skills and knowledge beyond basic nursing knowledge. School nurse certification helps to ensure quality and competence among those practicing in the school setting and ensured that school nurses had the body of knowledge needed to competently practice nursing in a school setting. Certification was implemented to address the need for competent school nurses, not to add another set of fees or legal requirements.

Since then, we have worked to ensure pathways for nurses to either enter at a level that they have already shown an understanding of the knowledge needed by the education and experience already attained, or to follow a pathway that enables them to glean this knowledge. We have also worked to provide quality school nurse specific educational programs to continue learning about new advances in care specific to the school population.

School nurses are also hired and evaluated by education administrators who have no medical training and are not competent to judge nursing practice. Certification helps to draw candidates who are passionate about students and education, and who will be able to respond appropriately and effectively to an emergency in the school setting. Certification promotes longevity and satisfaction in practice. It validates knowledge and skills, promotes excellence, and advances the health and education of students.

The NH School Nurses' Association realizes that there is a nursing shortage. While to date there are few open positions, and most of those are related to the lack of appropriate salaries for nurses. Since this is a fluid situation, we support the need to broaden the experience requirement beyond pediatric practice.

I hope you will continue to consider the history and context for certification with this simple amendment. Please vote to support HB 208.

Sincerely,

Pamela P DiNapoli, PhD, RN

Chair NH School Nurses' Association Legislative Action Committee

School Nurse Manchester NH

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