

**SECTION XV:**  
**STANDING ORDERS AND GUIDELINES**  
**FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE**  
**TO TREAT AND TO PERFORM**  
**LABORATORY PROCEDURES**

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# GUIDELINES FOR STANDING ORDERS FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE

**Issued by Regional Health Officers  
Public Health Division, NM Department of Health**

School nurses face new challenges daily in assuring the health of school children. To assist school nurses in meeting these challenges, Regional Health Officers in their statutory role of oversight of school health staff provide certain standing orders to direct school nurses in specific treatments and testing.

These standing orders are provided to authorize specific nursing activities in school districts where such nursing activities are in alignment with local school district policy. They do not create or supersede school district policy but may be adopted as policy by school districts.

All standing orders from the NM Department of Health, Public Health Division, Medical Director and Regional Health Officers, posted on the New Mexico School Health Manual web site, will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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# STANDING ORDER FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE TO ADMINISTER AUTO-INJECTOR EPINEPHRINE

**IF**, in the school nurse's professional opinion, an individual in the school setting is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction, the nurse is directed to immediately activate the emergency system by **CALLING 911** or direct someone else to do so.

**THEN** the nurse should:

- place the person in the supine position with legs elevated unless doing so interferes with breathing **AND**
- Inject epinephrine by auto-injector intramuscularly into the antero-lateral aspect of the thigh (through clothing if necessary) according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

**Note:**

*Epinephrine auto-injectors are available in 0.3 mg dose (EpiPen 1:1000) and 0.15 mg dose (EpiPen Jr 1:2000). Using two 0.15 mg doses to obtain a 0.3 mg dose is permissible.*

**Dosage:** 0.3 mg EpiPen if 5 years of age and older  
0.15 mg EpiPen Jr if under 5 years of age

**Frequency:** If symptoms persist a second dose may be administered 5-20 minutes after the first dose.

**BEFORE** epinephrine is administered for anaphylaxis one or more of the following symptoms should be present on nursing assessment.

- urticaria (hives, generalized itching)
- angioedema (lip, facial tongue, uvula swelling)
- upper airway obstruction (laryngeal swelling, hoarseness, lump in throat, difficulty swallowing and difficulty breathing)
- bronchospasm (wheezing, cough)
- hypotension (faintness, weakness, paleness, feeling of impending doom)

**IF** the school nurse is not available, trained personnel should administer the epinephrine auto-injector according to these same orders.

**Note:** The product insert for EpiPen and EpiPen Jr is available at:

[http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda\\_docs/label/2008/019430s044lbl.pdf](http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2008/019430s044lbl.pdf)

**See accompanying guidelines.**

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# **GUIDELINES FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE TO ADMINISTER AUTO-INJECTOR EPINEPHRINE**

## **Introduction**

Anaphylactic reactions are rare but one of the most common life-threatening emergencies that may occur in the school setting. Anaphylaxis is the most severe manifestation of a systemic allergic reaction and usually occurs within 30 minutes after the sensitized individual is exposed to the antigen. The more rapid the onset of symptoms, the more severe the reaction is likely to be. Early recognition and management is critical to preventing full blown anaphylaxis and possible death.

In an anaphylactic reaction one, several, or all of the symptoms listed in the standing order for treatment may be present. Anaphylaxis may present as shock or upper airway obstruction. Any child who suddenly develops hives should be closely observed for the development of additional signs of systemic allergic reaction.

The most common sensitizing agents encountered in schools are:

- food (nuts, legumes, shellfish, eggs);
- stinging insects (wasps, bees);
- antibiotics (penicillin, cephalosporins, sulfa);
- exercise;
- heat and cold.

## **Guidelines for School Nurses**

- Allergy history needs to be established for all students and staff at the beginning of each school year.
- Students and staff should be educated about known allergens in the school environment.
- Each student known to be sensitized to any allergen should have available at school an epinephrine auto-injector with current expiration date.
- The school nurse should develop a plan to inform teachers and staff of the location of epinephrine auto-injector(s) and their appropriate use in anaphylaxis treatment.
- A plan for maintaining epinephrine auto-injector(s) kept in the school setting should include monitoring the product expiration date(s).
- If, in the professional opinion of the school nurse, an epinephrine auto-injector should be available at school for an individual student, a request should be made to the student's health care provider for such an order as well as the prescription and guidelines for the pen's use. Both the order/prescription and guidelines should be included in the student's school health plan.



# **GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF VACCINES BY THE SCHOOL NURSE**

## **Introduction**

School Nurses and licensed practical nurses under the statutory oversight of the NM Department of Health (DOH) Regional Health Officers (RHO) are authorized by standing order to administer immunizations in the school setting. School nurses who choose to practice under these standing orders are required to adhere to the following guidelines.

## **Guidelines for School Nurses**

- School nurses who choose to practice under the standing order for vaccine administration signed by the NM Public Health RHOs shall have competency in vaccine administration and perform all nursing procedures primarily under the NM Nurse Practice Act standards.
  
- Vaccine administration competency may be maintained by the school nurse through collaborative practice with other healthcare professionals such as a public health nurse or a healthcare professional in another setting (e.g., primary-care clinic) or by structured training such as that offered through the NM Child Health Immunization Learning Initiative (CHILI) training during a Regional school health update, through the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, etc. Trainings may be customized to include regional protocols and procedures that might differ from one NM Public Health Region to another.
  
- School Nurses administering immunizations in the school setting under RHO standing orders should follow the same protocols as public health nurses administering immunizations in public health clinics. (Protocols are available from the NM Immunization Program or local public health office.)
  
- Any questions concerning protocols or standing orders for vaccine administration by the school nurse in the school setting should be directed to the local Public Health Regional School Health Advocate or RHO.

# STANDING ORDER FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE TO TREAT HEAD LICE/PEDICULOSIS

See Section X for more information on pediculosis/head lice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*)

IF crawling lice are viewed on a student by the school nurse,

ONLY THEN should treatment be initiated. Two methods of treatment are commonly used:

1. Chemical treatment: the school nurse is authorized to make available to the diagnosed student and appropriate contacts any of the following preparations for the treatment of head lice. **Products should be used exactly as recommended.**

**Age 0-Adult (including pregnant and lactating women)**

- **Pyrethrins** (Active Ingredient)  
RID, A-200, R+C Shampoo (Product Names)

**OR**

- **Permethrin** (Active Ingredient)  
NIX 1% Cream Rinse (Product Name)

2. Non-Chemical treatment: Involves applying hair conditioner to wet washed hair; then combing with a louse comb (special fine toothed comb). The caregiver sections off the hair and removes the lice a section at a time combing from the scalp out. Rinse and dry the hair once the entire head has been combed. Repeat this process every three days for two weeks. Recheck the head for re-infestation once a week for one month. If adult lice are found, then restart the combing process.

AFTER diagnosis of head lice infestation and making arrangements for treatment these actions should be followed:

- Send student home **at the end of the school day** to return after one treatment (either method) has been completed,
- Educate parent or guardian on treatment and management methods,
  - ✓ Check all household members for live lice and treat **ONLY** those with live lice using either method.
  - ✓ Change and launder pillow cases exposed to lice within the last day. Wash and remove all hair on brushes, combs, and hats. No other extra household cleaning is necessary.

## NOTES:

- *Maintain confidentiality of affected student and his/her family.*
- *Mass screening of children for head lice is ineffective and unnecessary.*
- *Head lice are not the result of poor personal hygiene.*
- *Head lice do not transmit infectious disease.*
- *Never use environmental insecticides to control head lice; they are toxic and ineffective.*
- *Lice/Pediculosis is not a reportable condition.*
- *It is an unjustified response to exclude any child from school due to head lice or nits.*

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# **GUIDELINES FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE TO ADMINISTER OXYGEN**

## **Introduction**

Oxygen use in the school setting is increasing and is the standard of care for some medically challenged students. Written orders from the medically challenged student's primary care provider for handling potential emergencies related to that student should be a part of the Individualized Health Plan (IHP). These orders should take into consideration the isolation of the school in relation to emergency medical care and the potential need for immediate intervention in an emergency situation.

In the school setting there may be times when school staff, volunteers and visitors will require the use of oxygen. Identifying these individuals prior to an emergency situation allows opportunity to obtain guidance from the school district's identified local emergency medical officer or an individual's primary care provider should initiation of oxygen administration be required.

## **Guidelines for School Nurses**

- As with any emergency situation, the local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system should be activated if other than routine oxygen is administered to an individual.
- The school district's identified local emergency medical officer should be requested to provide guidance to the school district about use of oxygen in the school and whether its availability is appropriate or not for a particular setting.
- Identifying medical conditions of students and staff that might require oxygen administration prior to an emergency situation will assist the medical officer in appropriately assessing potential needs and making recommendations to the district regarding oxygen availability and usage. It also gives the nurse leverage in requesting written primary care orders for potential individual student needs.
- Distance of the school from the nearest EMS should always be considered when developing the school's policy for oxygen storage, use and maintenance.

# GUIDELINES FOR PREGNANCY TESTING BY THE SCHOOL NURSE

## Introduction

Pregnancy testing as a laboratory procedure in the school setting should be administered according to CLIA (Clinical Laboratories Improvement Act) regulations. For more information about obtaining a CLIA certificate or waiver contact the state CLIA Program at 505-222-8646.

If pregnancy testing is to be performed by the school nurse, it is essential that the CLIA certified agency provide training on the test and establish standards of care for all staff regarding performing the test, counseling the patient, and providing results, referral or follow-up to patients who are pregnancy tested by the school nurse.

School nurse supervision should always be enforced if a home pregnancy kit is made available for a student to self-test, and the same standards of care are expected to be followed as though laboratory testing was being performed.

It should be kept in mind that every laboratory test may yield a false-positive or false-negative result. Therefore, the results of any test should be considered in the clinical context and appropriate action taken (e.g., repeat testing in two weeks if a false-negative result is suspected).

## Guidelines for School Nurses

- Pregnancy testing provides an opportunity for preventive health education and counseling, **regardless of the result**. Each patient requesting pregnancy testing should be informed of services available in family planning, sexually transmitted disease, mental health counseling, and social services in the community. Young and/or distraught clients may need immediate emotional support and assistance getting services. Any agency unable to provide these essential services and support to every patient should not perform pregnancy testing but should refer to community providers who can provide appropriate support and services.
- Each pregnant patient should be informed of all of her options and offered support and assistance in selecting options. It is important to explore with the client her current emotional support system (i.e., family members, other trusted adults) and to offer her help in discussing the pregnancy with identified individuals if she so desires.
- Early referral for medical care and/or other services is essential. Undecided clients should be given information to allow them to access services and support at a later time. Agency staff where pregnancy testing is performed should be knowledgeable about a wide variety of related service providers and funding resources in the community, as well as school assistance and resources for expectant parents. Follow-up with each patient to assure that her physical, emotional and educational needs have been addressed is likewise essential.

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# STANDING ORDER FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE WHEN DELEGATING NURSING ACTIONS IN THE CARE OF STUDENTS WITH DIABETES

**IF**, in the school nurse's professional opinion, the safety of care delivery to the student with diabetes will not be compromised and the NM Nurse Practice Act is not violated;

**THEN** delegation of care tasks to licensed and unlicensed individuals is appropriate

**ONLY** for those nursing actions which that person is prepared, qualified or licensed or certified to perform;

**AND** the delegated nursing actions will be supervised by the school nurse;

**AND** the care giver has been approved by both the school nurse and the parent or guardian of the student.

**TRAINING** for volunteer diabetes care givers must be provided by the school nurse or other health care professional with expertise in the care of persons with diabetes;

**AND** it must be based on national standards found in "*Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed*" and the New Mexico supplement to the national guide, e.g.

[http://ndep.nih.gov/media/Youth\\_NDEPSchoolGuide.pdf](http://ndep.nih.gov/media/Youth_NDEPSchoolGuide.pdf)

and

<http://www.nmschoolhealthmanual.org/resources/forms.htm> Section IV;

**AND** it must include use of the Diabetes Medical Management Plan that can be accessed in the "*New Mexico School Health Manual*" Resources at <http://www.nmschoolhealthmanual.org/resources/forms.htm> Section IV;

**AND** as a safeguard it must include a requirement to have the amount of syringe-drawn insulin verified to be within the appropriate range for the individual student with verification being made either visually by a second on-site volunteer trained to provide care for the student or by phone contact with the parent/guardian or school nurse.

**See accompanying guidelines.**

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# GUIDELINES FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE WHEN DELEGATING NURSING ACTIONS IN THE CARE OF STUDENTS WITH DIABETES

## Introduction

In New Mexico approximately 1,000 students with diabetes attend school and need care management either through self-management or through school district health services staff that may include licensed or unlicensed volunteer care givers. These standing orders were developed to provide the school nurse with medical support and backup when making the choice to delegate nursing actions in care management in the school setting for students with diabetes.

## Guidelines for School Nurses

- A school nurse goal in diabetes management in the school setting should be to guide schools in understanding diabetes and its management and assure the coordination of diabetes care with the individual student's diabetes health needs.
- When delegating care tasks the school nurse should refer to the New Mexico Standards of Nursing Practice (16.12.2.12 NMAC):

“...B. The nurse shall assign/delegate to licensed and unlicensed persons only those nursing actions which that person is prepared, qualified or licensed or certified to perform.

  - (1) The nurse is accountable for assessing the situation and is responsible for the decision to delegate or make the assignment.
  - (2) The delegating nurse is accountable for each activity delegated, for supervising the delegated function or activity, and for assessing the outcome of the delegated function or activity.
  - (3) The nurse may not delegate the specific functions of nursing assessment, evaluation and nursing judgment to non-licensed persons.”
- When full-time school nurse services are not available then delegation of care to appropriately trained individuals helps assure that the safety of the student is maintained in the school setting through the development and implementation of individualized care and training of school staff.
- Diabetes education that uses a training curriculum based on the national guide “*Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed*” and the New Mexico supplement to the guide meets the criteria of national standards for diabetes education. These tools can be accessed at the following websites:

[http://ndep.nih.gov/media/Youth\\_NDEPSchoolGuide.pdf](http://ndep.nih.gov/media/Youth_NDEPSchoolGuide.pdf)

and

<http://www.nmschoolhealthmanual.org/resources/forms.htm>, Section IV.