



# Health Is Academic

OFFICE OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS  
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Coordinated School Health ▪ Safe and Orderly Schools ▪ Office of Child Nutrition

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*Fit, Healthy, & Ready to Succeed*

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Students are our most valuable resource, so we need to protect them from health problems that can impair academic performance. Students who experience health disparities and suffer from a chronic disease, or have psychosocial or behavioral disorders, may experience poor school performance. A student who is unhealthy is unlikely to be attentive, alert, and ready to learn. (NASN, 2002) To this end, School Health Services can be a significant component in a continuum of care from the school, to the family, to the community care system. This continuum is necessary to 'bridge' the school, family, and medical communities so that students are able to participate in school at the highest level.

School Health Services is one of the eight components of the Coordinated School Health model. Goals of Health Services are to promote the health of students through:



- Preventative and early identification services (ex. Screenings for vision, hearing, & scoliosis)
- Emergency care for injury & illness & referral
- Management of acute & chronic health conditions
- Management & monitoring of communicable diseases
- Immunization compliance
- Health information & referral resource for school staff, students, & families
- Support for a healthy & safe school environment

Health services are provided and/or supervised by qualified professionals such as school health nurses, nurse practitioners, psychologists, dentists, dental hygienists, health educators, registered dietitians, school counselors, speech therapists and occupational therapists. These professionals appraise, protect and promote the health of students. Health services are designed to coordinate with local community health care professionals to ensure early intervention, access and referral to primary health care services, provide emergency care to students and staff with illness or injury, provide services for students with special healthcare needs, and provide educational opportunities for promoting counseling opportunities for individuals and families.

The school nurse is an invaluable partner in ensuring that students are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. They are key in the promotion of health services and support your school through the following:

- Facilitate positive student response to normal development
- Promote health & safety
- Intervene with actual & potential health problems
- Provide case management services; and
- Actively collaborate with others to build student & family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self-advocacy, and learning (National Association of School Nurses, 1990).

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## Upcoming Events

### 2009 Mississippi Health Awareness Day

January 15, 2008

\*Events will be held statewide.  
For more information about an event in your area visit the OHS website

[www.healthyschoolsms.org](http://www.healthyschoolsms.org)

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## Be Smart this Flu Season

Cooler nights and mornings remind us that winter is on its way. This is the perfect time to review ways to maintain a healthy school environment this winter season. Winter time brings with it colder temperatures which lead to more time spent in closed, heated indoor spaces, often with hundreds of other staff members and students in the school setting.

Mississippi school nurses know that the work of educating our youth does not stop with the common cold. Therefore, schools must combat the higher risk of illness that comes along with this time of year. Consider the following tips as a way to maintain good health:

- Wash hands often! Hand washing is the #1 way to prevent the spread of infection. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for 30 seconds before meals, after using the restroom and anytime hands may be soiled. Also, it is recommended that you cough or sneeze into your elbow to avoid germs on your hands.
- Get a flu shot! The flu can be a very dangerous illness. The CDC recommends the flu vaccine as the first and most important step to avoid this dangerous illness.
- Be active! Not only is the risk of illness greater during winter but the cold weather may discourage many people from maintaining a physical fitness regimen. However being active can not only help you warm up, but it can help you get or stay fit and help you avoid the winter blues. Bundle up and enjoy your favorite outdoor activity or find a safe indoor facility to exercise.
- Get plenty of rest! Listen to your body. Make certain you are devoting adequate time for relaxation and sleep. A rested body is able to better defend itself against germs.
- Eat right! There are few fresh grown fruits and vegetables available during the winter months. However, it is still vital to your health and immune system to consume 3-5 servings of each, daily. Also, it is an excellent idea to take a multi-vitamin to ensure your body is receiving the nutrients it needs.
- Take care of yourself! If you do find yourself sick this winter, seek the proper treatment. If you are contagious, stay home until your doctor says you are well enough to return to work. This will not only give you the proper time to rest and recover.



## Advocates for Health

School Nurses and School Health Coordinators are your districts biggest advocates in health education. They are committed to the promotion of healthy behaviors, and management of health conditions in your school community. While every district may not have a school nurse, each district should have a School Health



Coordinator. These positions are designed to take the lead in health promotion in your school. Current data indicates that we have many health barriers. As we

complete this semester and enter a new year, utilize the health champions on your campus to confront those barriers. You may consider an event as part of MS Health Awareness Day to be held January 15, 2009. Together you can impact the life-long health of your students, families, and communities. For more information on upcoming health-related events, visit the OHS website.

## School Safety Training

The Division of School Safety is offering training opportunities for MDE certified School Resource Officers and Campus Police Departments. See details below:

Firearms Qualification - December 17-18 in Gulfport  
 School Safety Officer Basic Course: March 16- 20 at  
 MLEOTA in Pearl

A quarterly Active Shooter Training will be scheduled. If you have a facility available, please let us know.

A new 3-day advanced course for administrators has been created. Administrators will receive a School Safety Administrator certificate upon completion. Application for SEMI credits has been made. The course will include: School Safety Law, Crisis Response Planning, and Administrative Investigations. Given regionally, this course will be offered in one day increments. Administrators must complete all days of training to receive certification. Dates have not been determined at this time.

Additional courses available for districts are as follows:

- Oleoresin Capsicum Recertification
- Passive Restraint for Educators
- Crisis Response Plan Development
- Administrative Investigation for Administrators
- Threat Assessment Training
- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- School Safety Assessments

All trainings are free excluding travel expenses of the instructor and carry CEU credit. Contact Chelley Brinson at [cbrinson@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:cbrinson@mde.k12.ms.us) for additional information. To be added to the listserv send an email including: name, email, school or agency, title, and phone number. The listserv is updated monthly and sends out important school safety related information.

## Say YES to Participating in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Chances are if you've recently heard a speech or read a newspaper article that contained health statistics, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) provided those statistics. The YRBS was developed to monitor priority health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of mortality, morbidity, and social problems among youth and young adults in the United States. The YRBS also monitors general health status and the prevalence of obesity and asthma. Through the YRBS findings, school officials can better meet the mental, academic, and social needs of students by employing the appropriate interventions.

In March 2009, Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) will collaborate with the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) to conduct the YRBS in 100 randomly selected middle and high schools.

The Office of Healthy Schools (OHS) will provide four training opportunities for school and or district staff members assigned the responsibility of administering the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The trainings will provide instruction and information to ensure the administration of the survey in all designated schools and classrooms is conducted in a standardized manner. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey Administrator training dates are as follows:

February 4	Jackson	Central High School
February 6	Gautier	Gautier Public Library
February 12	Starkville	Starkville High School Library
February 20	Cleveland	Delta State University Union

For additional information, including results from the 2007 survey, visit the OHS website.



## Snapshots, Building a Bigger & Stronger Web site

The physical and mental well being of our students continues to be of great importance for school districts and the Mississippi Department of Education. There is a proven direct correlation between student at-risk behavior and how well they perform academically. Snapshots, an online data warehouse of student at-risk behavioral data, continues to support school district and state initiatives by providing current data and related sites in an easy to use format.

The Mississippi Prevention Data Improvement Project (MPDIP) is pleased to announce an enhancement to the snapshots website in 2009. Funding was secured through a MPDIP one year no-cost extension awarded to the Office of Healthy Schools in September of this year.

This enhancement will involve the creation of an online interface, giving the web site visitor the ability to query student behavioral data from identified sources (SmartTrack, YRBS, etc) into an exportable/printable format. Data reports and related sites will continue to be updated to the website, but for the visitor who is looking for something more, this new enhancement will give them the ability to create specific data sets. Registration will be required to gain access to this section of the site, but once registered the visitor will have complete use. A success story section of the website is also planned, giving school districts a venue to promote successful projects and initiatives that counteract at-risk student behaviors while improving academic performance.

Teachers, administrators and the general public are encouraged to visit this site -[www.snapshots.ms.gov](http://www.snapshots.ms.gov)- as MDE strives to become your preferred source for student at-risk behavioral data sources and website links.



## Health Education Institutes Being Held Across the State

The Health Education Institutes have become a reality! These institutes, held in three locations across the state, are an effort to assist school districts and teachers with the implementation of the Healthy Students Act. Over 60 teachers across the state are taking advantage of the opportunities that the institute offers: 3.0 CEUs and for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade science or physical education teachers, an endorsement to teach Health Education.

The first institute was taught in Jackson during the month of November with two additional institutes scheduled after the first of the year. The location and dates for the two remaining institutes are:

Hattiesburg - January 10, 17, 24, & 31  
Columbus - February 7, 14, 21, & 28



A final training day is scheduled for July 17, 2009 in Jackson. Registration is still open. For more information visit <http://register.mde.k12.ms.us>.

## Wellness in My School Contest

The Office of Healthy Schools, in collaboration with the Mississippi Alliance for School Health, is announcing the third annual "Wellness In My School" Contest. Any student organization that is sanctioned by the Mississippi Department of Education is eligible to participate in this contest that encourages student activity in the area of school wellness. Cash awards will be given to the top three winners and winning projects will be presented during the Mississippi Institute for School Health, Wellness and Safety in September of 2009. For more information visit the OHS web site and look under *What's New*. The deadline for entries is May 8, 2009.

## Paying for Dental Care?



Do you know a child who needs dental care but the family cannot afford to pay?

Mississippi's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides dental coverage equivalent to the benefits offered under the State and Public Employer's Health Insurance Plan. CHIP covers children to age 19 from families with income up to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) who are not eligible for Medicaid and are without other insurance. To apply, visit <http://www.dom.state.ms.us/ApplicationForms/MSHB-CHIPApp.pdf> or call 1-800-421-2408.

Children under age 18 with dental problems who do not qualify for assistance from any other source may obtain care through the Dental Corrections Program (DCP), offered by the Mississippi State Department of Health. The amount of assistance is based on family income and size. An application must be completed at a county health department and a treatment plan from a child's dentist must accompany the application. Orthodontic care is not covered by CHIP or DCP.

For more information, contact the MSDH Oral Health Program at (601) 576-7500 or visit our website at [www.healthymms.com/dental](http://www.healthymms.com/dental).

*Contributed by: Carol Black, Regional Oral Health Consultant at the Mississippi Department of Health*

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There are approximately 426 registered school nurses in Mississippi. These positions are funded many different ways.

The Coordinated School Health model is a powerful move toward recognizing and addressing the close relationship between health and learning. This approach is summarized by the following philosophy: "Healthy students make better learners and better learners make healthy communities." Health Services is a key component of this effective model-approach.

*Contributed by: Jodi Rankin, Director  
Bureau of Community & School Health at the Mississippi  
Department of Health*

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## Be Smart this Flu Season

It will ensure that you are not sharing your germs with others.

In the school setting both staff and students need to be proactive in planning ways to stay happy, healthy, and fit, even when it is cold outside. By implementing some of the above mentioned strategies, one is off to a good start to ensuring their health and the health of those around them.

*Contributed by: Dru Holdiness - RN, BSN NCSN  
President, Mississippi School Nurse Association*

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS  
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL  
359 NORTH WEST STREET  
P.O. BOX 771  
JACKSON, MS 39205-0771