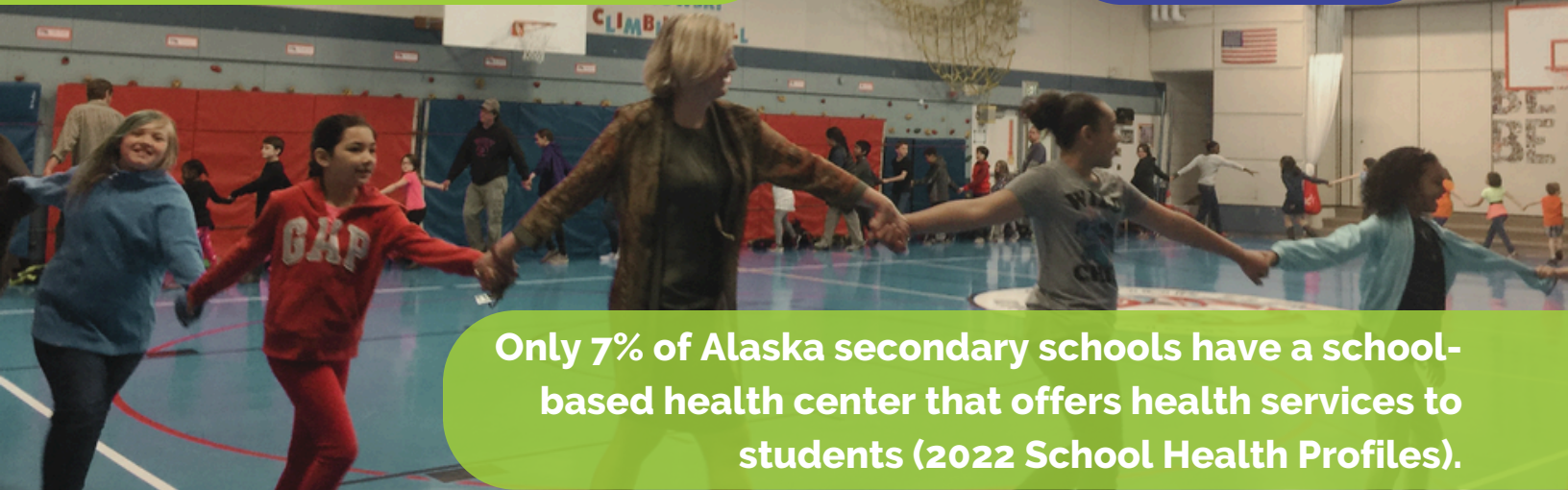


Health Services



Only 7% of Alaska secondary schools have a school-based health center that offers health services to students (2022 School Health Profiles).

The Importance of School Health Services

One in five American children have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or seizures. These health conditions can negatively affect students' academic success. In addition, increased risk for health disparities adds to the academic achievement gap.

School health services is one of the ten components represented in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model. School health services are vital to student health and success in school. Research indicates students with access to a full-time school nurse are 1) less likely to visit the emergency room, 2) more likely to visit an appropriate health care provider if they have a referral from the school nurse, and 3) less likely to miss school due to illness. Students with chronic conditions, such as asthma, have shown academic improvement when they have access to a full time school nurse.

Health Services in Schools

Illness, Injuries, and Emergency Care

The school nurse is often the only on-site health professional trained to respond to emergency medical crises.

Chronic Condition Management

School nurses can help monitor student's chronic conditions and manage prescriptions for students who take them during the day.

Care Coordination

School nurses and community health service providers can help organize care for students with chronic conditions such as asthma. They can share information and maintain communication among staff.

Family Engagement

School nurses can make families aware of the variety of services available at school and how they can benefit children.

First Steps

All students benefit from health services. School health services can help students with different medical circumstances to excel. Some ways schools can begin to integrate health services include:

- Training for all staff on school health procedures.
- Identify who in the school is responsible for contacting families when medical needs arise.
- Advocate for board policies that reflect medical needs in your schools (sample policy can be found on aasb.org).
- Ensure the student handbook reflects policy and best practice.

Chronic Health Conditions

Chronic health conditions impact almost 20% of students, which is why it is imperative that schools have staff that are trained and prepared to support these students so they can safely stay in school and ready to learn.

Asthma

Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism. Many students lack an asthma action plan and don't have access to an inhaler at school, leading to delayed care, unnecessary 911 calls, and missed instructional time.

- [**Asthma-Friendly Schools Initiative**](#)
- [**Managing Asthma: A Guide for Schools**](#)
- [**School-based Asthma Management Program \(SAMPRO\)**](#)

Allergy and Anaphylaxis

Food allergies impact approximately 1 in 20 school-aged children and a reaction at school is a fairly common occurrence. Up to 1/4 of anaphylactic reactions are among students with a previously undiagnosed allergy, with food being the most frequent trigger.

- [**Injection Connection, Alaska Asthma and Allergy Foundation**](#)
- [**Allergy and Anaphylaxis Toolkit**](#)
- [**Stock Inhaler Toolkit for Schools**](#)
- [**Food Allergy Management in Schools \(FAMS\) Expert Recommendations**](#)

Diabetes

Students have reported challenges in school staff understanding of diabetes. Because blood glucose control is vital to the long-term health and academic outcomes for students with diabetes, it is imperative that staff are appropriately informed to support student safety in school.

- [**Training Resources for Schools**](#)
- [**School Nursing Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline: Students with Type 1 Diabetes Toolkit**](#)

Seizures

Seizures, commonly characterized by uncontrollable shaking or jerking, are the third most common school emergency. A timely and appropriate response is critical for managing student safety.

- [**Schools and Seizure Preparedness**](#)
- [**Guidance for Schools, CDC**](#)

Options for School Health Staff

Health services will look different for each school community and should be constructed to complement the unique assets and needs of a school community.

Ideally, every school would be staffed with a full time registered nurse. If this is not possible, options could include a nurse staffed at the district level or seeking alternative ways for community partnerships in which a nurse could come to schools for health history reviews and immunization updates.

Key Community Partners Include:

- Public health nurses
- Tribal Health Partners: Community Health Aides, Dental Health Aides, Behavioral Health Aides and/or local tribal clinic staff
- Non profit groups like the Lions Club (Vision Screening)

Ways to Engage Students

- Educate students with health conditions, such as asthma or food allergies, to identify triggers and how to manage their condition.
- Invite students to create bulletin board displays to promote healthy behaviors (physical activity, healthy eating, participating in subsistence activities, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention, etc.).

While the conditions are different, the components for managing these chronic conditions are the same. Key components include:

- Identify and monitor students with given conditions
- Develop written management plans
- Plan for emergencies
- Maintain written policies and protocols
- Manage medications
- Educate/train staff, students, and families
- Collaborate with families, healthcare providers, and community providers
- Maintain a safe environment
- Provide case management for students with frequent occurrences

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

Alaska and National Data

Every Student Counts!

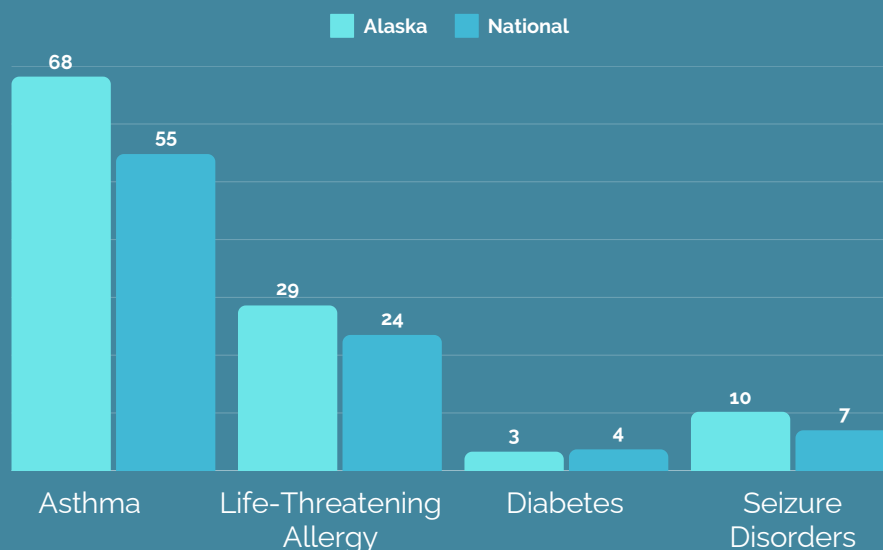
The National School Health Data Set: Every Student Counts! provides guidance to school nurses, school districts, NASN Affiliates organizations, and other organizations interested in child health. Data helps build bridges that connect school nursing to the rest of the health care system.



Chronic Conditions

Students in Alaska have rates of chronic disease that either significantly exceed or closely trail national averages in the following areas:

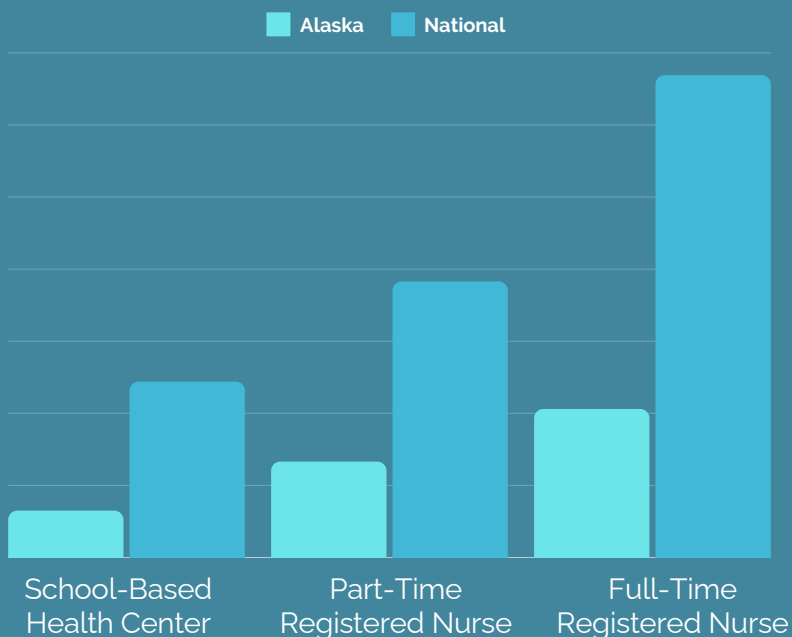
- **68 out of 1000 students in Alaska** have asthma, compared to 55 out of 1000 students nationally.
- **29 out of 1000 students in Alaska** have a life-threatening allergy, higher than the national average (24 out of 1000).
- **3 out of 1000 students in Alaska** have diabetes, on par with the national average.
- **10 out of 1000 students** in Alaska have a seizure disorder, compared to 7 out of 1000 students nationally.



Opportunities for Improvement

Alaska principals report that their schools have lower percentages compared to national averages in:

- Only 7% of secondary schools have a school-based health center that offers health services to students, compared to 24.4% nationwide.
- Only 13.3% of schools have at least a part-time registered nurse who provides health services to students, compared to 38.3% nationwide.
- Only 20.6% of schools have a full-time registered nurse who provides health services to students, compared to 66.9% nationwide.



CDC Healthy Schools



Summary of State School Health Services Data*

Chronic Condition Management



36% of secondary schools
Provided case management for students with chronic health conditions



56% of secondary schools
Had a protocol that ensures students with a chronic condition are enrolled in insurance programs if eligible



48% of secondary schools
Provided daily medication administration for students with chronic health conditions

School-Based Health Centers



7% of secondary schools
Had a school-based health center

Parent and Family Connections



53% of secondary schools
Linked parents and families to health services and programs in the community



22% of secondary schools
Provided disease-specific education for parents and families of students with chronic health conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes)

School Nurses



21% of secondary schools
Had a full-time registered nurse



13% of secondary schools
Had a part-time registered nurse

* 2022 School Health Profiles (Profiles) data presented on the first page. 2020 and 2022 data presented on the second page.



Health Services and the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model

Explore example strategies for aligning and coordinating specific school health services practices across the different WSCC components:

Physical Education & Activity

- Establish a system for identifying and referring students with health problems affected by physical activity including asthma, diabetes, and being overweight/obesity.
- Collaborate to support students with special health care and chronic health conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes) to be physically active.

Health Education

- Educate students on health and safety topics including physical activity, healthy eating, preventing or quitting tobacco use, and preventing unintentional injuries, violence, and suicide.
- Educate students about accessing health services and resources within the community.
- Educate students about self-advocacy during doctor, dentist or other health-related appointments.

Nutrition Environment & Services

- Coordinate with the school nurse to develop menus for students with health problems affected by nutrition including anemia, diabetes, eating disorders, food allergies, and overweight/obesity.
- Offer a reward program (i.e., nutrition stickers or incentives from the nurse/health aide) for students who increase fruit and vegetable intake.

Health Services

- Promote the health and safety of students and families by sharing educational materials on behavioral health support, conversation starters, community presentations, and informative bulletin board displays.
- Educate staff about the resources provided by school health services, including education on first aid, health screenings, emergency care, medication administration, and appropriate management of chronic conditions.
- Develop a tracking system to recognize frequent student health issues and utilize the data to develop interventions



Counseling, Psychological, & Social Services

- Assist the school nurse in developing a plan and resources for addressing barriers to learning, reasons for poor attendance or inattention to class, and developmental problems.
- Partner with school health services to provide interventions for students who use tobacco.

Health Services and the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model

Explore example strategies for aligning and coordinating specific school health services practices across the different WSCC components:

Community Involvement

- Identify a consulting school health provider to assist with school health policy and programs.
- Include community medical and safety personnel in planning of emergency protocols.
- Establish connections between health services, school district services, community resources, and referral providers.

Family Engagement

- Partner with parents to develop management plans for students with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or obesity.

Employee Wellness

- Provide a CPR and first aid training for all staff.
- Provide professional development on the health and academic benefits of physical activity, healthy eating, not using tobacco, preventing unintentional injuries and violence, and managing asthma.
- Organize a health screening for all employees.

Physical Environment

- Develop policies and plans to address student health issues, such as asthma and food allergies.
- Create and implement an emergency response plan that outlines procedures for assessing, managing, and referring students and staff during a medical emergency.
- Analyze data on unintentional injuries and violence to identify necessary improvements or repairs to the school's physical environment.

Social & Emotional Climate

- Designate the school health office as a safe space for students to express concerns about health issues, including bullying and incidents of violence.
- Ensure all students receive culturally competent care in a safe, private, and confidential setting.



Resources

Healthy Children:

Healthy Children is the digital extension of the American Academy of Pediatrics' mission to provide the most trustworthy health content to parents and caregivers.

National Association of School Nurses:

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) website is a key resource for school health professionals. It provides guidance, tools, and research to enhance the practice of school nursing, ensuring that students are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. The site offers access to clinical practice guidelines, professional development opportunities, advocacy tools, and evidence-based resources aimed at improving student health outcomes. NASN supports school nurses through its networking platforms, educational events, and publications, playing a vital role in optimizing student health across the nation.



Local and Culturally Relevant Resources

The following resources are unique to the state of Alaska.

Alaska Oral Health:

The Alaska Dental Action Coalition (ADAC) works to improve oral health in Alaska by bringing together dental professionals, organizations, and the public. The website offers resources on dental care, education, and advocacy efforts to enhance oral health access in Alaska.

Alaska Impact Alliance:

Alaska Impact Alliance 907 Resource Navigation Website that helps Alaskans find and navigate local resources, social services, and benefit systems.



Local and Culturally Relevant Resources (cont.)

[Navigating the Health Care](#)

[System: Alaska:](#)

A free adapted training/curriculum for Alaska on Health Literacy and health care system in Alaska.



photo: Alaska Native Health Board

[I Know Mine:](#)

Health resources from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Corporation for youth and their supporters, covering topics like sexual health, relationships, and mental well-being, with educational materials and self-test kits to promote informed decision-making and overall well-being. Encourages community engagement and provides a platform for asking health-related questions.



[Alaska Careline:](#)

A 24/7 crisis intervention service offering confidential support for individuals experiencing emotional distress, depression, or suicidal thoughts. It provides counseling, education, and referrals through phone, text, and online resources to help those in need across Alaska.

[Alaska Department of Education and Early Development:](#)

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development has a growing catalog of eLearning courses available for educators in Alaska.

[Alaska School Nurses Association:](#)

The mission of the Alaska School Nurses Association is to optimize student health and academic success by supporting professional school nurses in Alaska. To lead the transformation of school health and to advance school nursing practice to keep students healthy, safe and ready to learn.

[Alaska Health Department Section of Public Health Nursing:](#)

The Alaska Health Department's mission is to protect and improve the health of Alaska residents through partnering with individuals, communities, and systems while advancing self-reliance, dignity, and cultural integrity. They work across the state in 16 Public Health Centers and support more than 250 communities.

[SOA School Nursing and Health Services Programs:](#)

The Alaska Department of Health webpage provides resources for school nurses, including guidelines, orientation materials, forms for care plans, and professional development opportunities. It also links to resources on student health conditions like asthma and diabetes, supporting the role of school nurses in student health and well-being.

[Help Me Grow Alaska:](#)

Help Me Grow is dedicated to promoting healthy child development statewide by providing support and information to individuals and organizations who care for and about children and young adults.