

Section II

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

Basic school health services include several of the areas in which school health is experiencing its greatest role redefinition: health assessments (both population-based and individual), care of children with special health care needs, and management of communicable diseases. Because the school nurse is usually the manager of the school health service program, basic health services generally fall within her or his purview. Section II provides guidelines for these services while emphasizing that school nurses, like their colleagues in other health care settings, are licensed by the Board of Registration in Nursing; hence school nursing practice must be consistent with the board's statutes and regulations.

Chapter 5: Health Assessment identifies and describes assessments, physical examinations, and screenings required by statute or regulation and offers the most current guidelines and protocols for implementation. It also includes guidelines for nursing assessment of common illnesses presented by students in the school setting, emphasizing the opportunity the nurse has in individual student health encounters to assess a student's health status and risks — particularly important when children lack primary care providers and/or are uninsured or underinsured.

Chapter 6: Nursing Practice in the School Setting summarizes standards of school nursing practice as developed by national professional organizations, as well as the requirements for initial and professional licensure by the Massachusetts Department of Education. DPH recommendations to school nurses regarding ongoing professional development and networking with peers are described, as are Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing standards and regulations relevant to nursing practice in the school setting. Specific attention is paid to delegation of duties to unlicensed personnel and administration of medications in school.

Chapter 7: Students Requiring Specialized Health Services describes the importance of planning for the care of children with special health care needs, as they are becoming an ever-larger proportion of the school population. The chapter describes the four major laws that define the accommodations, instruction, and services such children are entitled to receive in school: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); and Massachusetts Special Education Law and Regulations. Guidelines are provided for developing and implementing individual health care plans (IHCPs), individualized education plans (IEPs), and school policies on the care of children with Do Not Resuscitate/Comfort Care (DNR/CC) orders. Detailed information is provided on several specific chronic health conditions commonly found in the school setting, including life-threatening allergies to certain foods and to latex.

Chapter 8: Infectious Disease Control is designed to assist school personnel in managing infectious diseases, including ensuring that students are appropriately immunized and preventing the spread of any infectious diseases that arise. It provides a detailed and comprehensive description of the communicable diseases that school health service programs encounter, as well as guidelines for school attendance and parent notification. Elements of school planning for an infectious disease emergency and bioterrorism are also discussed.