

Section I

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Emerging research findings as well as larger societal trends have been challenging schools to embrace an ever more active and expansive role in health promotion and health service delivery. Section I addresses this challenge. Covering the three general components of school health — health services, health education, and a healthy school environment — this section describes how to design school health programs to meet the ongoing and emerging health needs of young people, how to assess the particular needs of an individual school and community, and how to enhance program effectiveness by coordinating all program elements to support healthy lifestyles and behaviors.

Chapter 1: New Dimensions of School Health analyzes the evolving and expanding expectations for the role of school health. Escalating levels of overweight, childhood asthma, and type 2 diabetes and the presence of many more medically fragile individuals within the student population are placing unprecedented demands on school health programs. In response to these challenges, and in keeping with current public health practice, school health programs are becoming much more proactive, emphasizing preventive health promotion, care management, early risk identification and referral, and a comprehensive, coordinated approach to health care. Increasingly, comprehensive school health programs are built on a foundation of close collaborative partnerships among school health and human services personnel, teachers, and administrators and external health care providers, families, and the community.

Chapter 2: Developing an Effective School Health Program provides practical administrative guidance for schools on developing and/or improving their comprehensive school health programs, with a particular focus on the school health service program. Methods for performing a student health needs assessment and establishing a school health advisory committee are explained. The importance of meeting certain qualifications for various personnel, establishing clear role distinctions, and performing health program evaluations is described, as are basics of emergency response and formulation of an emergency response plan. Recommendations are made for policies and procedures regarding collection of health data and electronic records management. This chapter contains a large number of sample forms, position descriptions, and policies.

Chapter 3: Comprehensive School Health Education identifies sound principles for health education, pre-kindergarten to 12th grade, and provides content standards for a comprehensive school health curriculum. The chapter provides guidance for schools on where to locate professionally developed, thoroughly evaluated, and effective curricula and how best to go about selecting and integrating these programs. It also suggests the most appropriate personnel to include in the team or work group assembled for this purpose.

Chapter 4: A Safe and Healthful Environment addresses the impact of the school's physical environment on learning and on the general health and well-being of students and staff. The chapter presents a range of indoor health issues including space, air quality, storage and handling of hazardous materials, and cleanliness, along with related standards and regulations. Outdoor safety issues, building security, and disaster/terrorism planning are also covered. The numerous government agencies with responsibilities for the various aspects of the school environment are identified.