

# An Alabama Public School Nurse Survey to Benefit Children with Special Health Care Needs

**By: K. Todd King, PhD, CHES, RRT**

**Supported in part by:**

**University of Alabama at Birmingham,**

**Project T 72 MC 0001 from MCHB/HRSA/DHHS, and**

**Children's Rehabilitation Service (a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services)**

## Study Overview

In the fall of the 2003-2004 school year a survey was mailed to every public school in the state of Alabama. The survey requested information from the school nurse concerning their continuing education needs, the preferred modalities for receiving this education, the prevalence of chronic conditions, and the health care procedures performed in their schools.

A total of 1481 were sent out with 422 returned for a response rate of 28.5%.

## School Nurses:

### Continuing Education

The school nurses were requested to give their top three choices of continuing education topics and the format in which they would like to receive this education.

There were 701 responses with 129 different suggested topics.

The top two topics were Juvenile Diabetes and Asthma/Asthma Treatment in an in-service format in their local area.

### Topics

1. Juvenile Diabetes
2. Asthma/Asthma Treatment

### Format of Inservice

In-service in their local area

### Credentials

85% of the respondents were R.N.s

### Currently Getting Info.

The school nurses were requested to report the sources of their current information in caring for children and youth with special health care needs.

1. Parents of Students
2. In-Services
3. Other Nurses
4. Doctors

### Would Like To Get Info.

The school nurses were questioned regarding their preference in obtaining information on children and youth with special health care needs.

1. In-services
2. Parents of Students
3. Doctors

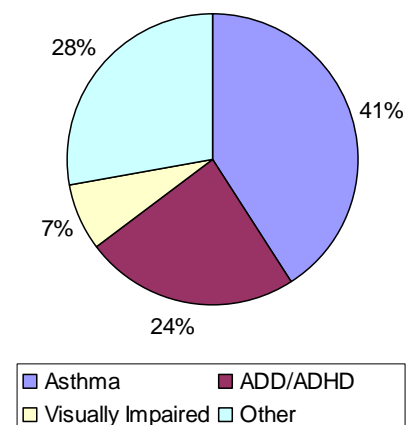
## Chronic Conditions:

The school nurses were asked to report the number of students with each of a list of chronic conditions.

### Top Three

1. Asthma
2. ADHD/ADD
3. Visual Impairment

Top 3 Reported Chronic Conditions



### Mean

56 chronic conditions per school

### At The State Level

82,210 cases of chronic conditions in Alabama's public schools

## Health Care Procedures: Annual Basis

The school nurses were requested to report the number of students requiring each health care procedure during a school year. In addition, they were asked to report the person(s) normally performing the procedure.

### Top Three

1. Vital Signs
2. Oral Medications
3. Inhaled Medications

### Mean

48 students required health care procedures per school year

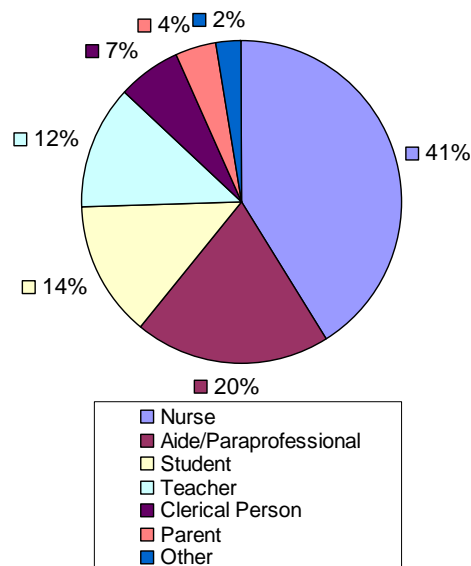
### At The State Level

71,443 students require health care procedures per school year

### Person Performing

41% of the time the school nurse performed the health care procedure

Person Performing Health Care Procedure



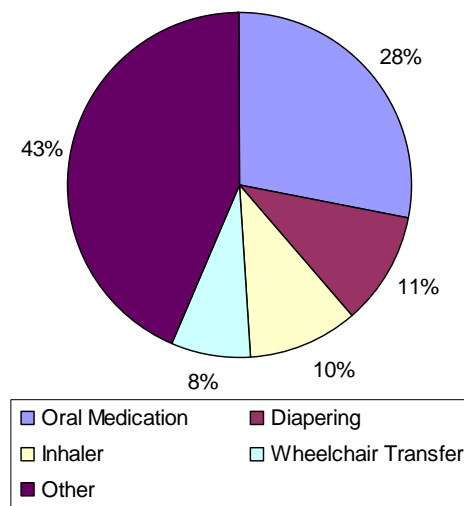
## Daily Average

The school nurses were requested to record all health care procedures performed for a period of five consecutive days. This data was then compiled into a daily average for each of the health care procedures.

### Top Three

1. Oral Medications
2. Diapering
3. Inhaled Medications

Top 3 Health Care Procedures Performed in 5 Day Period



### Mean

22.4 health care procedures performed per day per school

### At The State Level

33,145 health care procedures performed per day

## Summary:

A survey was created and validated via a modified Delphi technique with a national representation of school nurses for the panel of experts. A total of 1481 surveys were mailed out and 422 surveys were returned for a response rate of 28.5%. The data collected represents the 422 schools in which the school nurses serve. A five-day sample was utilized for the health care procedures performed in an effort to allow the data to be statistically representative of the state of Alabama's public school population.

School nurses requested information on Juvenile Diabetes in an inservice format. School nurses reported performing the health care procedures 41% of the time with the remainder divided amongst aides, clerical staff, parents, students, and others. At the state level, there were 82,210 cases of chronic conditions and 71,443 students requiring health care procedures per school year. These chronic conditions and students requiring health care procedures resulted in 33,145 health care procedures being performed daily in Alabama's public schools.

### PI Contact Information

K. Todd King, PhD, CHES, RRT  
 Assistant Professor  
 Towson University  
 Dept of Health Science  
 8000 York Road  
 Towson, MD 21252

office: 410-704-4223  
 fax: 410-704-4670  
 e-mail: ktking@towson.edu