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In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in an effort to protect all children and school staff in the City of New Haven, we request additional nursing support for the schools.

Under the current guidelines for reopening schools, screening, assessment, and rapid isolation of any child and/or staff member who exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 is required. Nurses will be required to complete the usual tasks of assessing sick or injured children. The Public Health Nurses will also now be an integral part of the school team protecting the school community from COVID-19. The nurses will assess children who arrive at school with symptoms of COVID-19, as well as any child who becomes ill during the day. The nurse will be responsible for this rapid assessment of the child and movement to the isolation room as appropriate, to protect other students and staff. Nurses will also assist in the follow up of students who are absent to determine the cause of the absence. When a child returns to school following illness, the Public Health Nurse will review documentation from MD, whether testing was performed and if the appropriate amount of time has elapsed since onset of illness or positive test result for the student to return to school.

Everyday activities for school nurses require assessment and treatment of students, as well as responding to emergency situations such as life-threatening allergic reactions and seizures. Nurses also administer many medications which cannot be delegated to other school staff, including insulin for students with diabetes and emergency seizure medication. Nurses also provide complex care for students in many schools including straight catheterization, tube feedings, suctioning, and other nursing tasks as necessary.

The Nurse in each school will also be the building COVID liaison, required under the State's reopening of school's plan.

The current budget allows for 41 public health nurse positions. Under the recommendations for the reopening schools and planning for 1 nurse in every school building, 7 full time nurses are needed to bridge the gap and provide a nurse for every school. Additional nurses as substitutes in case of absence is also required, with 2-3 nurses as subs needed. In prior fiscal years, this has been provided through a per diem budget. Over the last 2 years, no substitute nurses have been provided for daily absences. The substitute nurses could be hired as part time per diem nurses or could be agency nurses.

The NHHD covers 46 school buildings. 3 schools have 2 nurses due to high student census and complex needs of students (Wilbur Cross, Hillhouse, East Rock).

This nursing support will allow us to provide safe care to all students in the New Haven schools while ensuring that in the era of COVID-19, that the school community as a whole has guidance from public health professionals in each school.

Thank you in advance for your support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Bond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Maritza Bond, MPH
Director of Health