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SB 1178

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF
CHILDREN WITH DIABETES WHILE AT SCHOOL***

Good morning Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Welch, Representative Perillo and members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I speak in strong opposition to SB 1178, An Act Concerning Care and Treatment of Children with Diabetes while at School.

The Connecticut State Department of Education publication ***LEARNING AND DIABETES, A Resource Guide for Connecticut Schools and Families***, was developed through a multidisciplinary collaboration including school nurses and nursing supervisors, the Connecticut Board of Education, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Connecticut Department of Public Health, Diabetes Control Unit, Yale New Haven Hospital, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Connecticut Education Association, and parents. The Guide is comprehensive and dedicated to children with diabetes. The Guide was designed so that every child with diabetes is cared for appropriately and safely while at school and during school sponsored events.

EXCERPTS FROM THE GUIDE

Section 10-212a of the Connecticut general statutes allows qualified school personnel to administer oral, topical, inhaled, and nasal medications and in the case of medically diagnosed life threatening allergic conditions, medications including cartridge injectors. The law does not allow qualified school personnel to administer any other

injectable medications. If an unlicensed individual takes a course that certifies him/her to give medications in the home that person may not administer medication at school.

EXCERPTS FROM DECLARATORY RULING- Board of Nursing Examiners

Delegation By Licensed Nurses To Unlicensed Assistive Personnel,

1. “The registered nurse shall be responsible for determining what aspects of the medical and nursing regimen the registered nurse may delegate to unlicensed personnel, regardless of the setting.
2. Performance of non-nurse delegated and non-nurse supervised nursing activities by unlicensed persons constitutes practicing nursing without a license and is not in the interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the public"., in this case the student.
3. A nurse may delegate to an individual who in the nurse's judgment has been shown to be competent, on a case-by-case basis, a simple task...**one that does not require nursing judgment**, to proceed from one step to the next **in a known and predictable situation**.
4. The nurse shall make all delegation decisions on the sole basis of client, ie. student welfare.
5. If...the registered nurse... responsible for the delegation believes that specific task delegation cannot safely occur, such nurse shall refuse to delegate that task and document... that... the supervisor is informed ...

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

1. The case-by-case analysis of what constitutes appropriate training and supervision of unlicensed personnel to whom the nurse may delegate nursing functions remains the responsibility of the registered nurse responsible for the student...plan of care.
2. Institutional policy does not abdicate the nurse's responsibility to ensure the appropriate delegation of the appropriate act to the appropriate unlicensed personnel at the appropriate time and circumstance.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The nurse may delegate selected nursing tasks to unlicensed personnel if the nursing activities do not require nursing assessment and judgment.

The registered nurse is solely responsible for the assessment, planning, and evaluation phases of the nursing process.

The registered nurse may determine that unlicensed personnel may collect certain objective and subjective data and report changes in client conditions, which fall outside normal parameters of client status.

Interpretation of reports or diagnostic parameters is the responsibility of the nurse.

Nursing procedures, which require an understanding of the nursing process, or nursing assessment and judgment during implementation are licensed activities....The nurse may not delegate responsibility for the implementation of a task which requires such knowledge or skills.

NURSING PROCESS

1. The registered nurse shall not delegate any task that requires any unlicensed personnel to exercise the knowledge, judgment, or skill required of a nurse.
2. The school nurse is responsible for using professional judgement to determine the appropriate level of care for each student, including whether or not tasks can be delegated.
3. The determination to delegate must be made on a case by case basis because each student's health condition, response and needs are different.

4. The situation must be known and predictable. Diabetes is not that situation.

Summary of the Issue

This legislation allows unlicensed personnel to provide care that conflicts with the legislated practice of nursing and compromises the safety of children. The care of children with diabetes in school, including management, insulin administration, administration of glucagon (which may be part of a diabetic plan), is a licensed task and may not be delegated to unlicensed personnel.

It should be noted that in hospital procedure prior to the administration of insulin, two nurses must check the dose. This procedure emphasizes the importance of Insulin administration by Professional nurses.

Diabetes care requires critical assessment, judgments, understanding metabolism, the effects of ineffective metabolism on the human body, the connection between activity, current health status (fever, exercise, illness), timing, calculations of carbohydrates to insulin, when and how to mix, administer, and monitor glucagon, and, of particular importance, individual idiosyncrasies.

Schools are not an extension of the home. Schools are educational institutions. Let me ask you to consider whether it makes sense to increase the role of unlicensed individuals who provide health care at school when a school nurse is specifically educated to care for the child with diabetes?

“Rather than pass single issue legislation, would it not be better to insure a standard of care to protect all children as they spend the better part of each day in school?”

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that accommodations based on the individual needs of the student must be made. If a student needs care provided by a nurse, then the district is obligated to provide it. If that is the case, why consider lowering the standard of care to? The goal of legislation should be to maintain the highest standard of practice that provides safe high quality care we should not compromise the health and safety of children. Lowering the level of health care provided in school by a nurse to care provided by an unlicensed person creates a situation with potentially serious consequences.

I urge you to make your decision with consideration of the testimony of school nurses who experience the reality of health care in our schools today. Today’s school nurse must be highly educated, highly skilled, and knowledgeable. Research shows that healthy children learn better. Who better to support that concept than a qualified registered school nurse? For the health and safety of children, I urge you to oppose Raised Bill number 1178.

RESOURCES

Board of Nursing Examiners *Declaratory Ruling* –

Delegation By Licensed Nurses To Unlicensed Assistive Personnel

http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/phho/nursing_board/guidelines/unlicensed_ap_dec_rul.pdf

State Department of Education Health Promotion Services/ School Nurse

LEARNING AND DIABETES, A Resource Guide for Connecticut Schools and Families

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/deps/student/health/Learning_and_Diabetes.pdf

State Department of Education Health Promotion Services/ School Nurse

Guidelines for Blood Glucose Self-Monitoring in School

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/deps/student/health/GlucoseGuidelines.pdf>