

# State of Health Services in Connecticut Schools

Summary Highlights  
2004-2007

Connecticut State Department of Education  
2008

**State of Health Services in Connecticut Schools  
Summary of Highlights  
2004-2007**

**Background**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), as part of its ongoing efforts to support and expand school health services provided to Connecticut students, has completed its fourth year of data collection regarding school health services. *This data collection process is designed to assist CSDE to understand the status of school health services in Connecticut school districts, the needs of school districts and students in the area of school health services, and progress being made in these areas over time.*

As one component of these ongoing efforts, CSDE commissioned **EDUCATION CONNECTION** to develop an online survey to collect information regarding the status of school health services from school districts throughout Connecticut. **EDUCATION CONNECTION** designed the survey process in collaboration with CSDE and the Connecticut State Health Records Committee. The survey process was pilot-tested in spring, 2003, and implemented in spring, 2004. The survey has been administered annually since 2004.

Each year, the coordinator of school nursing in each of one hundred sixty-nine (169) Connecticut school districts has been asked to complete the online survey. Response rates have ranged from 61 to 67 percent over the four-year period. Each year, **EDUCATION CONNECTION** has analyzed the questionnaire data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and developed a report in collaboration with CSDE. Final reports are available on the **CSDE and EDUCATION CONNECTION** websites.

This report presents a summary of survey highlights from 2004 to 2007. The purpose of this summary is to assist school districts and state agencies *to track trends in the status of school health services and needs over time.* The survey has been reviewed and revised as necessary over time. As a result, the time range presented in this summary varies.

**Survey Highlights**

**Nursing Staff:**

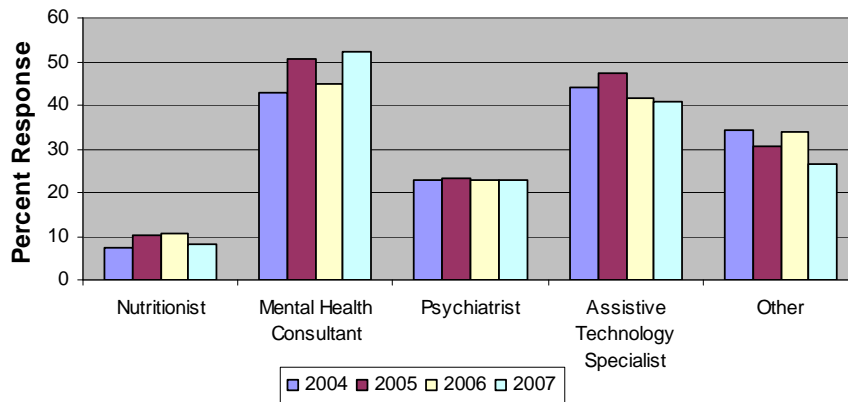
- 67% of full-time equivalent school nursing staff in Connecticut districts are classified as school nurses. Another 8% are nurse leaders.
- 69 to 73% of school nurses and 76 to 81% of nurse leaders are funded by the local boards of education.

Nursing Staff Classification	Percent of FTE Staff		
	2005	2006	2007
Nurse Leaders	8.7%	7.5%	8.4%
School Nurses	67.0	67.7	67.3
Other Registered Nurses	8.8	9.1	6.3
Nursing Support	15.5	15.7	18.0

**Additional Staff:**

- 6 to 11% of districts use the service of medical advisors more than 10 hours per month.
- 80 to 88% of medical advisors are funded through the local boards of education.
- 6 in 10 advisors specialize in pediatrics.
- Although respondents have commented on the need for more support in the areas of mental health services and nutrition, survey results suggest no appreciable increase in the percentage of districts employing specialists in these areas.

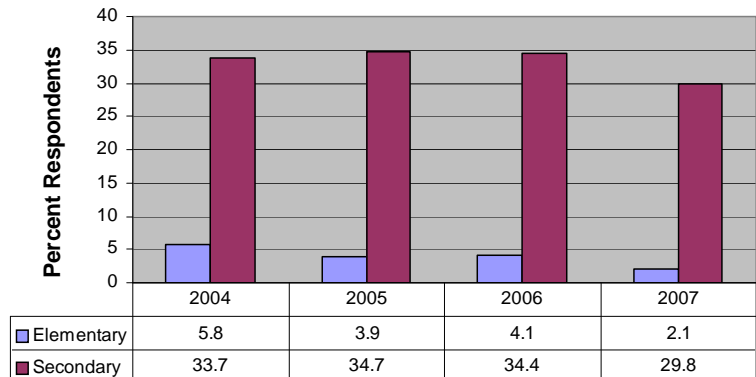
**Additional Specialists Employed by Districts**



**Staffing Levels:**

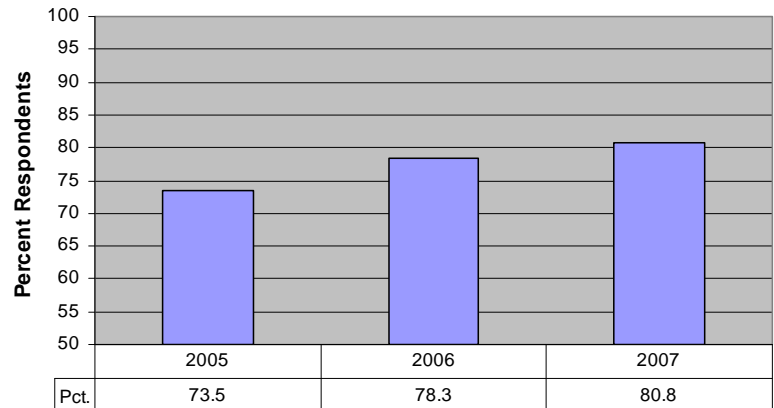
- A majority of Connecticut districts meet national guidelines that suggest a school district have no less than one nurse to 750 students.
- The percentage of districts not meeting the guideline ranges from 30 to 35% at the secondary level and from 2 to 6% at the elementary level.

**One Nurse to More Than 750 Students**



- A majority of Connecticut school districts have the equivalent of at least one full-time registered nurse in each public school.
- The percentage of districts with one or more FTE registered nurses in each public school was 74% in 2005 compared to 81% in 2007.

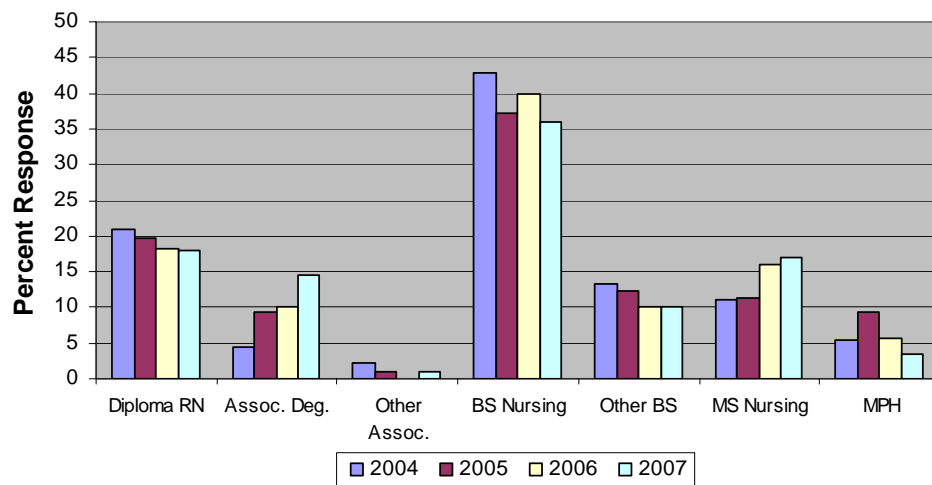
**One or More Full-Time Registered Nurses  
In Each Public School**



**Staff Qualifications:**

- On an annual basis, almost half of all Connecticut school nurses hold a BS in Nursing and almost a quarter are Diploma Registered Nurses.
- Nurse leader credentials have shifted over time...
  - 56% of districts had a nurse leader with a bachelor's degree in 2004 compared to only 46% of districts in 2007.
  - 7% percent of districts had a nurse leader with an associate's degree in 2004 compared to 17% in 2007.
  - 11% of districts had a nurse leader with an MS in Nursing in 2004 compared to 17% of districts in 2007.

**Qualifications of Nurse Leaders  
Nurse Leader 1**



**Health Care Screenings:**

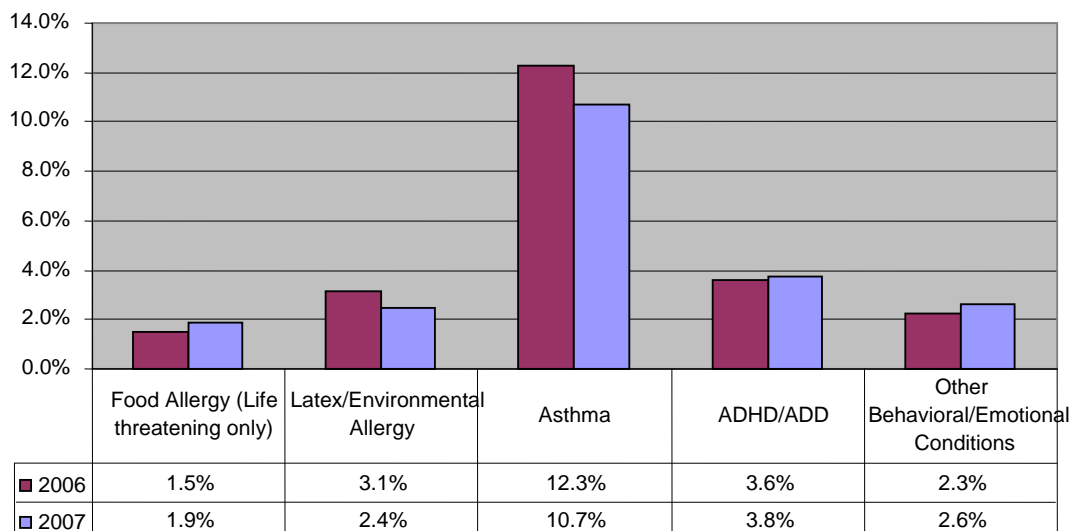
- The optional service provided most frequently by districts is pediculosis screening. Seventeen to 19% of students receive pediculosis screenings while only about 1% receive nutrition screenings.
- Mental health consultations are most likely to result in referral. While only about 2% of students receive mental health consultations, three of every ten students receiving a consultation are referred to an outside provider.
- 12 to 21% of districts provide dental services. The percentage of students receiving dental screenings, however, has never exceeded 13%.
- Vision screenings, compared to other mandatory services, generate the greatest number of referrals. About 6 to 7% of vision screenings result in a referral.

**Student Health Care Needs:**

*Note:* As a result of difficulties with survey completion, it is expected that numbers reported here are lower than the actual numbers of students experiencing each health care condition.

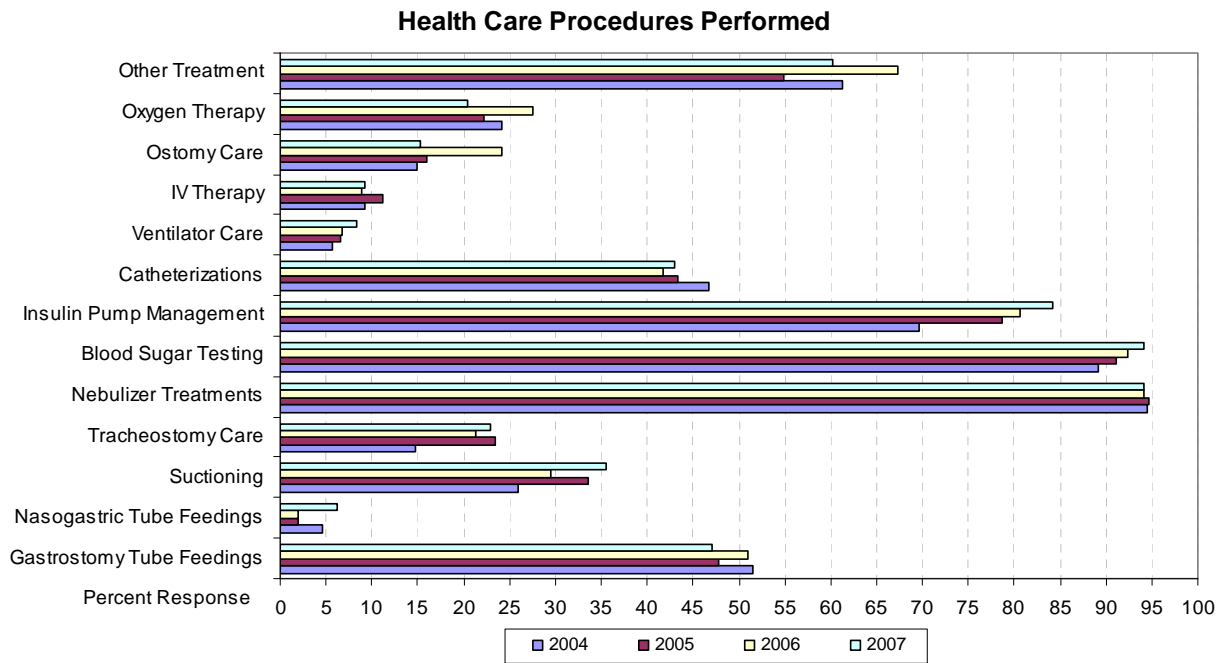
- Connecticut school nurses provide services to students with a wide range of physical and emotional health needs. The health care conditions reported most frequently by districts are asthma, allergies, ADHD/ADD, and other behavioral/emotional conditions.
- 10.7 to 12.3% of public school students in reporting districts in Connecticut have asthma.
- Almost 4% of public school students in reporting districts have ADHD/ADD.

**Percent of Public School Students**



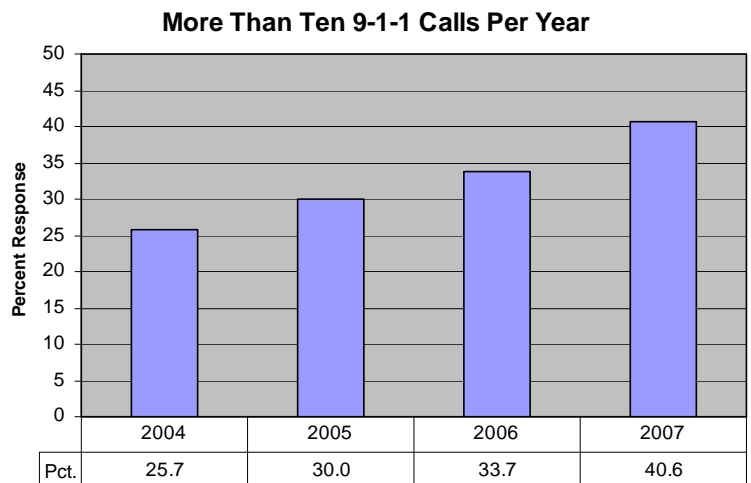
**Health Care Procedures Performed by School Nurses:**

- An increasing number of districts are performing insulin pump management procedures, blood sugar testing, tracheostomy care, and suctioning.
- 70% of districts performed insulin pump management in 2004 compared to 84% in 2007.
- 26% of districts performed suctioning in 2004 compared to 36% in 2007.
- Approximately 94% of districts performed nebulizer treatments each of the four years for which data are reported.



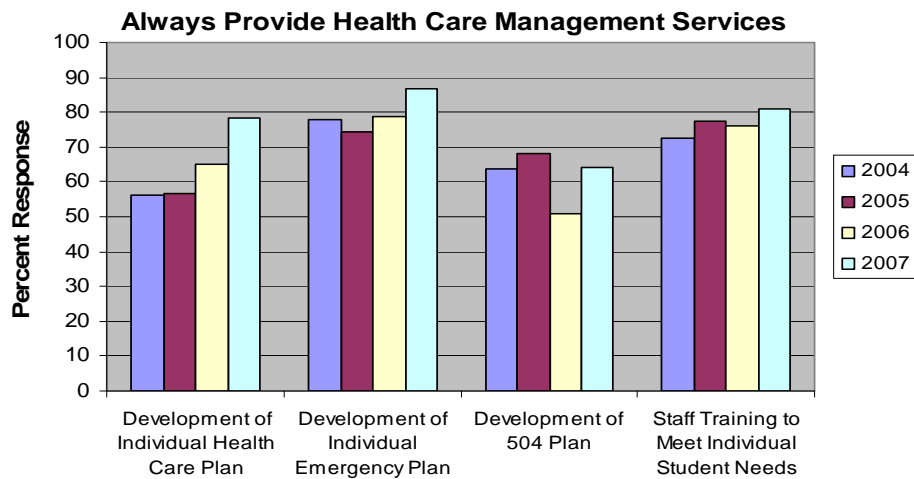
**9-1-1 Calls:**

- The percentage of districts making more than ten 9-1-1 calls per year has increased.
- 41% of districts reported placing more than ten 9-1-1 calls per year in 2007 compared to 26% of districts in 2004.
- Injury is the most frequently cited reason for 9-1-1 calls.
- Anaphylaxis is increasingly being reported as a reason for calling 9-1-1.



**Health Care Management Services:**

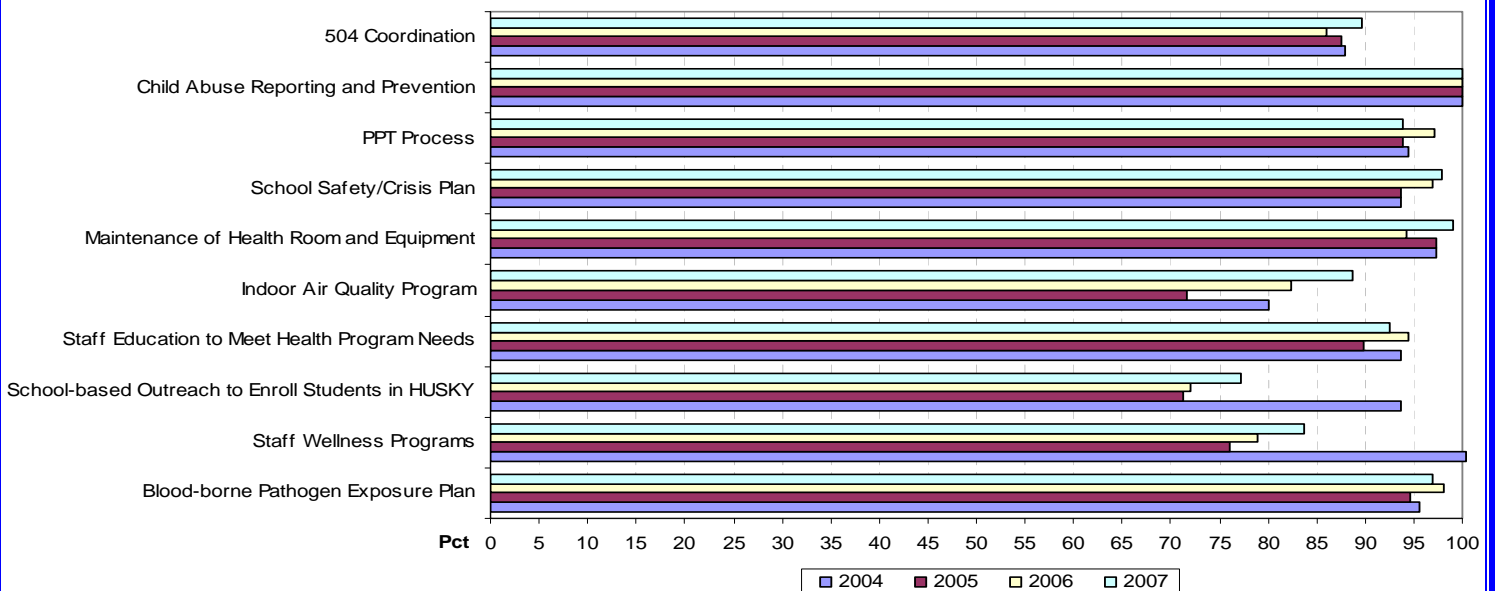
- An increasing number of districts always provide the development of individual health care plans. Seventy-eight percent of districts always provided this health care management service in 2007 compared to 56% in 2004.
- An increasing number of districts always provide individual emergency plans and staff training to meet individual student needs.
- Satisfaction with the quality of management services has increased. Six to 13% of respondents were not satisfied with management services in 2004 compared to only 2 to 4% in 2007.



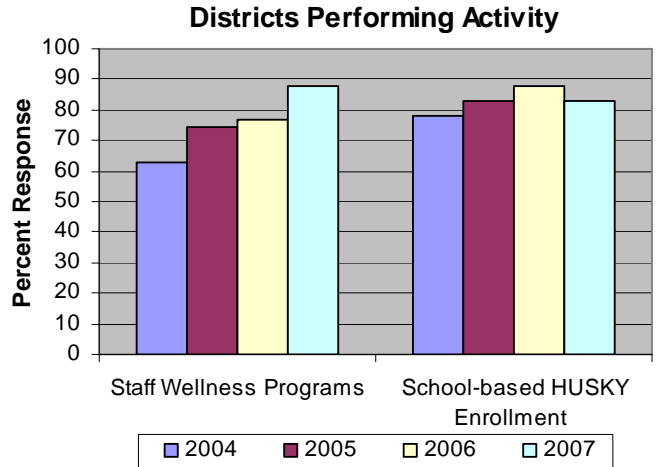
**Health Coordination and Education Activities:**

- Among districts performing child abuse prevention, health room/equipment maintenance, blood-borne pathogen exposure prevention, PPT, school safety/crisis planning, and staff health program education, at least 90% report that school health staff is involved.

**Health Services Staff Involvement**

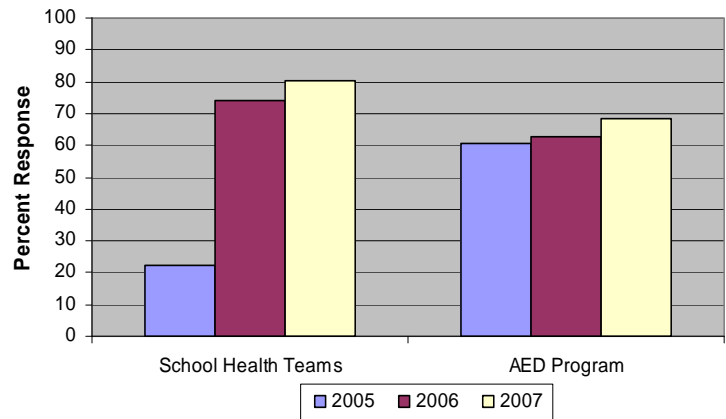


- Only two health coordination programs, school-based HUSKY enrollment and staff wellness, are performed by less than 90% of districts.
- An increasing number of districts have staff wellness programs. Sixty-three percent of districts had a staff wellness program in 2004 compared to 88% in 2007.



- In districts providing staff wellness, HUSKY enrollment, indoor air quality, and 504 coordination programs, 70 to 90% report that school health staff is involved.
- District programs in staff wellness and HUSKY enrollment are least likely to involve school health services staff.

- An increasing number of districts have an automatic external defibrillator (AED) program in place. Sixty percent of districts had an AED program in 2005 compared to 69% in 2007.
- The number of districts having a school health team has increased greatly from 2005. Twenty-three percent of respondents reported having a school health team in 2005 compared to 80% in 2007.



### Conclusion and Additional Resources

This report presents a summary of survey highlights from 2004 to 2007. Results can be used to assist school districts and state agencies to track trends in the status of school health services and needs over time. To see the full report, please go one of the following websites:

**Connecticut State Department of Education:**

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320768&pm=1&sdePNavCtr=|45534|#45539>

**EDUCATION CONNECTION:**

[http://www.educationconnection.org/new/programs/prog\\_sde.php](http://www.educationconnection.org/new/programs/prog_sde.php)