

The task of being a school nurse is both rewarding and daunting. During a “normal” time, a school nurse can face issues such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, sports injuries, and domestic violence. As the only medical professional for a group of hundreds of students, it requires great knowledge and great compassion. Lately, school nurses have not only had their normal concerns, they have also had to take care of those children during a global pandemic.

When the pandemic began, nurses were looked to for guidance in how to proceed with normal activities. This was no different for nurses in the school system. They were tasked with recognizing and caring for children as they became ill and trying to keep those around them safe while attempting to maintain privacy and HIPPA laws. In the process, trying to calm the children’s fears while battling personal concern.

The point in which schools shut down seems even more stressful. As a compassionate caregiver who sees the situations in which some children live, it is difficult knowing that these children are now stuck at home. Health problems such as poor nutrition and obesity are often made worse for children who are unable to have hot meals and physical education at school. The nurse at my daughter’s school was tasked with calling all children to check on their wellbeing when the schools were closed. Sadly, that is not the same as being able to see and care for them face to face. It is easy to wonder how many children’s difficulties slipped through the cracks at this time.

School nurses have had to worry about much more than medication times and PPE shortage during the pandemic. They have had to educate and plan for hundreds of children and employees. They are concerned for the well being of the kids in their

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care who they are no longer able to connect with, all while battling the same inner turmoil we all are regarding COVID.