Outside the Walls, A School Nurse Liaison/Consultant Program

HCEA 2006 Annual Meeting

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Presenter:

Joyce Allers, RN, Manager, School Health
Community Health and Advocacy

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta is one of the country's largest pediatric healthcare systems, with two hospitals and 430 licensed beds,16 satellite locations and access to 1,287 physicians representing 32 pediatric specialties.
- Children's was formed in 1998 when Egleston Children's Health Care System and Scottish Rite Children's Medical Center merged.
- Children's is committed to Advocacy through four focus areas: Injury Prevention, School Health Support, Obesity Prevention and Child Abuse Prevention.

Learning Objectives

- Identify ways children's hospitals can collaborate with providers and schools to improve the communication and discharge planning for chronically ill children.
- Discuss ways to partner with chronically ill children, their parents and their specialty care providers to improve the educational success of the child.
- Learn one model of expanding the continuum of care into the school setting.

The Problem

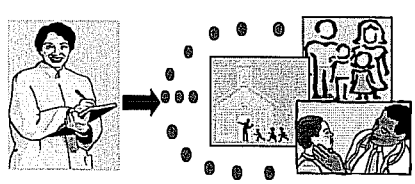
- Schools are often unprepared to receive children recently discharged from the hospital with complex medical or chronic illness.
- Parents have the responsibility to communicate the needs of their child with the school.
- Many parents have difficulty communicating, educating and advocating for their child.
- School personnel may have limited healthcare training, especially in pediatrics.

How Big is the Problem?

- **1.5 million school age children in Georgia in 189 school districts**
- **20% struggle with chronic illness or injury**
- **1/10 have asthma**
- **1/300 have type I diabetes**
- **Underserved/rural areas school nurse may be only health professional in area**

The Innovation

- The School Nurse Liaison Program provides an experienced pediatric nurse serving as consultant and resource for the child, family, school, and healthcare providers in school re-entry



The Liaison Nurse

- The Liaison Nurse reaches outside the hospital's walls to build relationships and improve communication
- The Liaison Nurse contacts hospital and clinic nursing staff, physicians and the child's family
- School staff and classmates are targeted in order to help them understand the illness and/or procedures necessary for the child to attend class regularly and maintain optimum health while at school
- Liaison nurses also serve as clinical and educational resources; assist with individual case management; provide liaison support between school and medical providers; and consultation on federally mandated Individual Education Plans and 504 plans

Staffing

- School Nurse Liaisons = 3.6 FTEs, as Hospital employees for 10 months/year
- Manager = 1.0 FTE serves as consultant-at-large 12 months/year

Liaisons connect patients and parents to schools and the healthcare system

- Hospital service lines
- Primary care practices
- Specialists practices
- 30 metro school systems

Confidentiality

- HIPAA compliant releases
- Parents sign written consent, then information released.
- FERPA confidentiality recognized
- School Nurse consultants/liaisons have access to patient information through EPIC.

Services provided

- Individual consultations
- Liaison case management
- Referrals to medical care
- IEPs and 504
- Training and continuing education of school nurses
- Fact sheets and educational collateral development
- School Health Manual development

Services provided

www.choa.org/buildingbridges

calendar

newsletter

awareness sheets

Partners

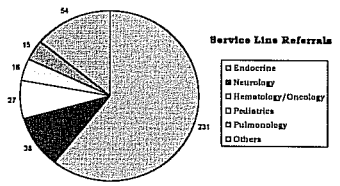
- Georgia Association of School Nurses
- Georgia Department of Human Resources
- Schools of Nursing
- Local Boards of Education
- Georgia Department of Education
- Georgia School Health Partnership

THE RESULTS

(The first eighteen months of operation
January 2002 through May 2003)

The Results

- 584 children discharged were supported in their school re-entry.
- 15 hospital service lines were represented



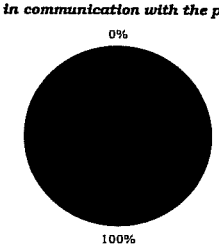
The Results

- Over 4,400 school personnel received training and education through over 47 educational forums and 1,318 consultations
- 584 liaison cases managed
- 895 referrals to medical care

The Results

School Health Personnel evaluation

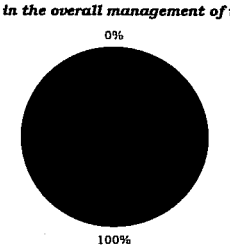
Improvement in communication with the pediatrician's office



The Results

School Health Personnel evaluation

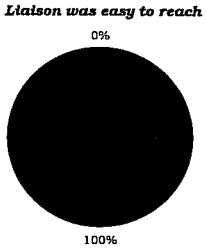
Improvement in the overall management of the child's health



The Results

Medical Staff evaluation

Liaison was easy to reach



The Results

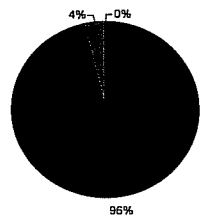
Medical Staff evaluation

Overall management of their child's health care at school

The Results

Medical Staff evaluation

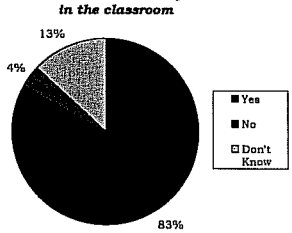
Interactions with the school personnel had improved



The Results

School Health personnel evaluation

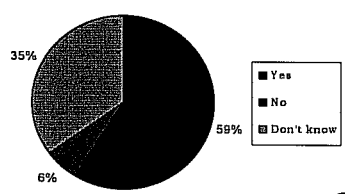
Increase in the child's comfort level in the classroom



The Results

School Health personnel evaluation

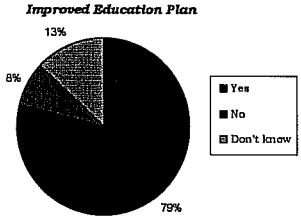
More time in the classroom each day



The Results

School Health personnel evaluation

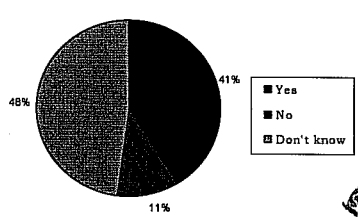
Improved Education Plan



The Results

School Health personnel evaluation

Decrease in the number of days absent



FUTURE SUSTANIBILITY

a bigger picture
Asthma
Cardiac Sudden Death Prevention
Immunization

Future Sustainability

- School Nurse Liaison program is currently funded through state grants and contracts (87%) and through hospital operations (13%)
- Goal is to sustain funding at this level and proportion of support
- Opportunity to expand geographic reach beyond the metropolitan area is dependent on additional funding
- Serving as a statewide training resource for school nurses is a strategic focus.
- Supporting school health and school nursing through legislative advocacy to increase number of school nurses in Georgia

Ratio of nurses to students in Georgia

1:8,800	1999
1:2,700	2001
1:1,287	2003

School Nurse Consultant/Liaisons

- 4 school nurse consultant / liaisons
- 791,161 students
- 30 school districts.
- 973 schools

School Re-entry for our patients

- **2005 YTD stats:**
- 339 school re-entry cases including:
  - heart, kidney and bone marrow transplants
  - traumatic brain injuries
  - childhood cancers.
  - diabetes
  - cystic fibrosis
  - sickle cell disease

Education for School Staff

- **2005 YTD stats:**
  - 5341 professionals educated including
    - School Nurses
    - Teachers
    - PE and athletic coaches
    - PTA leaders
    - School Transportation Directors

Topics include Diabetes, AEDs, Arthritis, Child Abuse, Spinal Injuries

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Key Lessons Learned

- The Nurse Liaison increases the effectiveness of both the hospital discharge staff and the pediatrician's office by planning for the child's re-entry back to school
- Schools, medical staff and families value this community service provided by the hospital and rate the overall management of the child's health as significantly improved
- Access to appropriate care is improved for our disadvantaged children
- Added benefit to Children's: Good will and visibility throughout the state of Georgia

Quotes from our stakeholders

- "Families would not be served as well without the services of Children's Liaison program." *a school nurse*
- "With our increase in younger newly diagnosed diabetics and other special needs children, the school nurse liaison is a vital link between schools and the doctors." *a school nurse*
- "Parents are better informed and verbalize comfort in knowing that we (the school) know more about their child's condition." *a school nurse*
- "The program is great! It needs more publicity." *a parent*
- "You put the teachers' mind at ease by telling her about other kids with diabetes." *a parent*
- "You were a blessing!" *a parent*