



CALHOUN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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School Wellness Program Receives Director's Award

The Calhoun County Public Health Department was recently recognized by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) at the Michigan Annual Premier Public Health Conference for its School Wellness Program (SWP). Each year, the MDCH recognizes local public health departments that demonstrate innovation and excellence in public health programs in the state. Applications are evaluated on the criteria of positive outcomes in health status, collaboration, resource sharing, ability to be replicated, and program cost effectiveness.

The School Wellness Program is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic, and life-long achievement of students within our public schools. The SWP provides a community-based, family-centered, prevention-oriented service promoting the health and well-being of school-aged children. The objective of the school nurse is to build and maintain a healthy school community by implementing strategies that promote student and staff health and safety, thereby improving the likelihood that students are both physically and emotionally prepared for school.

The school nurse provides education to students and staff on topics such as proper handwashing, good hygiene, and nutrition. The provision of this education to students and staff helps nurses minimize the spread of contagious diseases and keeps the students healthy, maximizing the potential for learning. The school nurse also provides follow-up care to reduce the number of absences, thereby increasing the amount of instructional time for students.

The true success of this program can be traced back to the hard work, passion, and diligence of not only the staff of the health department including Regina Crooks and Sharon Davids but also to all of the members of the Regional Health Alliance-School Wellness Committee. The planning, development, and execution of this program has taken several years and is rapidly becoming the ideal model for school wellness programs in Michigan.

Additional thanks goes out to the partners of the program including the: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek Community Foundation, United Way of Greater Battle Creek, Kellogg Community College, the Board of Health, and all Calhoun County schools and their staff.

I truly am amazed at the way that this program has come together and am proud to work with such dedicated and passionate people.

For more information, please contact Regina Crooks, Personal Health Services Manager, at
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