Healthy Schools Fact Sheet

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the State Department of Education are collaborating on a new program called Healthy Schools. This program will provide preventive services and promote child wellness in Idaho school districts that have a high percentage of low-income children and a low nurse-to-student ratio. Idaho Medicaid will provide grant funding to assist eligible school districts with the salary expenses of registered nurses working in grantee schools. The program will begin in September 2006.

Program Implementation

- Idaho Medicaid will contract with the Department of Education to provide funding for up to 10 school nurse full-time-equivalencies (FTEs).
- Grant amounts are proportionate to the percentage of low-income students in districts and some grantee districts will receive a fraction of an FTE. There will be more than 10 grantee districts.
- Approximately 80 percent of the funding for this program is from the federal Title XXI (Children's Health Insurance Program) allotment, and 20 percent is from the state.
- The school districts receiving the grant money will hire or contract with nurses to provide services to students in their districts.
- Each grantee district will submit quarterly reports to Idaho Medicaid through the Department of Education.

Program Benefits for Idaho Children

The Healthy Schools program will:

- Increase the provision of preventive health services for Idaho children.
- Strengthen resources necessary to improve the health of Idaho children.
- Improve Idaho's ability to deliver health services in school settings.
- Improve coordination of health services for children.
- Increase health screenings.
- Increase the provision of health promotion and disease-prevention services.
- Increase timely referrals to non-school-based health care providers.

Need For the Program

- 81 out of 114 Idaho school districts do not maintain school nurse programs.
- The current registered nurse to student ratio in Idaho schools is 1:2,393.
  - National standard is 1:750 for the general, non-special-needs student population.
- Schools participating in the national school lunch program must establish a school wellness program for the start of school after June 30, 2006. School nurses are uniquely qualified to assist in planning and to carry out many aspects of any wellness program.

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