

Children's Hospital Colorado Training School Nurses to Keep Care in the Community

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March 24, 2026

Here, it's different.™



Objectives:

- 1. Understand the needs and challenges of rural students in Colorado and identify opportunities to support their health success.**
- 2. Recognize the need for standardized trainings for school nurses to care for students with chronic health conditions and outline steps to design and implement them.**
- 3. Learn how to leverage political advocacy to secure federal grant dollars for meaningful community health projects, including strategies for proposals and partnerships.**

There are no financial disclosures



Mission

As a private, nonprofit pediatric hospital, our mission is to improve the health of children through the provision of high-quality, coordinated programs of patient care, research, education and advocacy.

Patient care

We keep our patients and their families at the center of everything we do, especially when it comes to experience, quality and safety. Equipped with the most advanced technology, our experts deliver some of the best outcomes in the country.

Research

We offer our patients the most innovative treatments today. Collaborating with our colleagues from the University of Colorado on the Anschutz Medical Campus ensures that our discoveries rapidly lead to new medicines, devices and treatment practices.

Education

Lifelong learning advances our mission. Through academic and community partnerships, we shape the future of pediatric health by training tomorrow's healthcare professionals.

Advocacy

Our influence extends beyond our health system. We bring health programs to the community and advocate in the state and national legislatures.



Children's Hospital Colorado School Health Team

Community Health and Advocacy Division



Our School Health Team:

30 school nurses delivering
contracted school nursing services
for almost 40 years.

(Identified Subject Matter Experts)

Who We Serve in Denver Metro Area (~62,000 students)

6 School Districts

22 Charter Schools

20 Childcare Centers

Situation/Background: Understanding Colorado Rural Students Health Needs

The number of medically complex students that are in Colorado is on the rise.

- More than 64% of all children in Colorado are categorized as having a special health care need.

Children in rural areas face a variety of access barriers to health care and face numerous health disparities, compared to their urban counterparts.

- 80% of the school districts are considered rural or small rural in Colorado.

School nurses play a pivotal role in optimizing student health outcomes, school performance/attendance, and promoting child well-being.

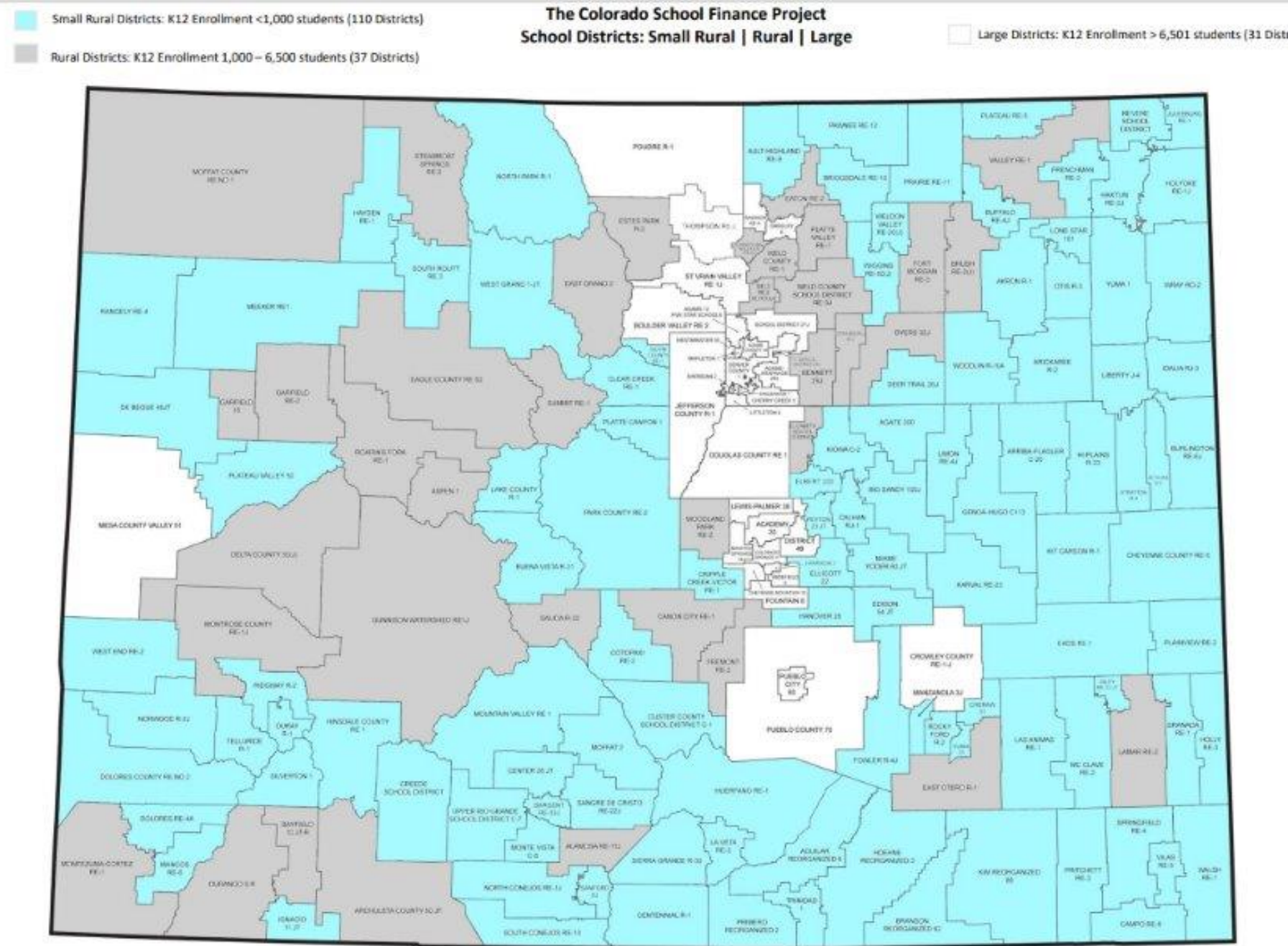
- What resources do these rural school nurses have to assure best practices are followed and taught?
- What training do these school nurses use to keep up to date on evidence-based practices?



Colorado Rural School Districts

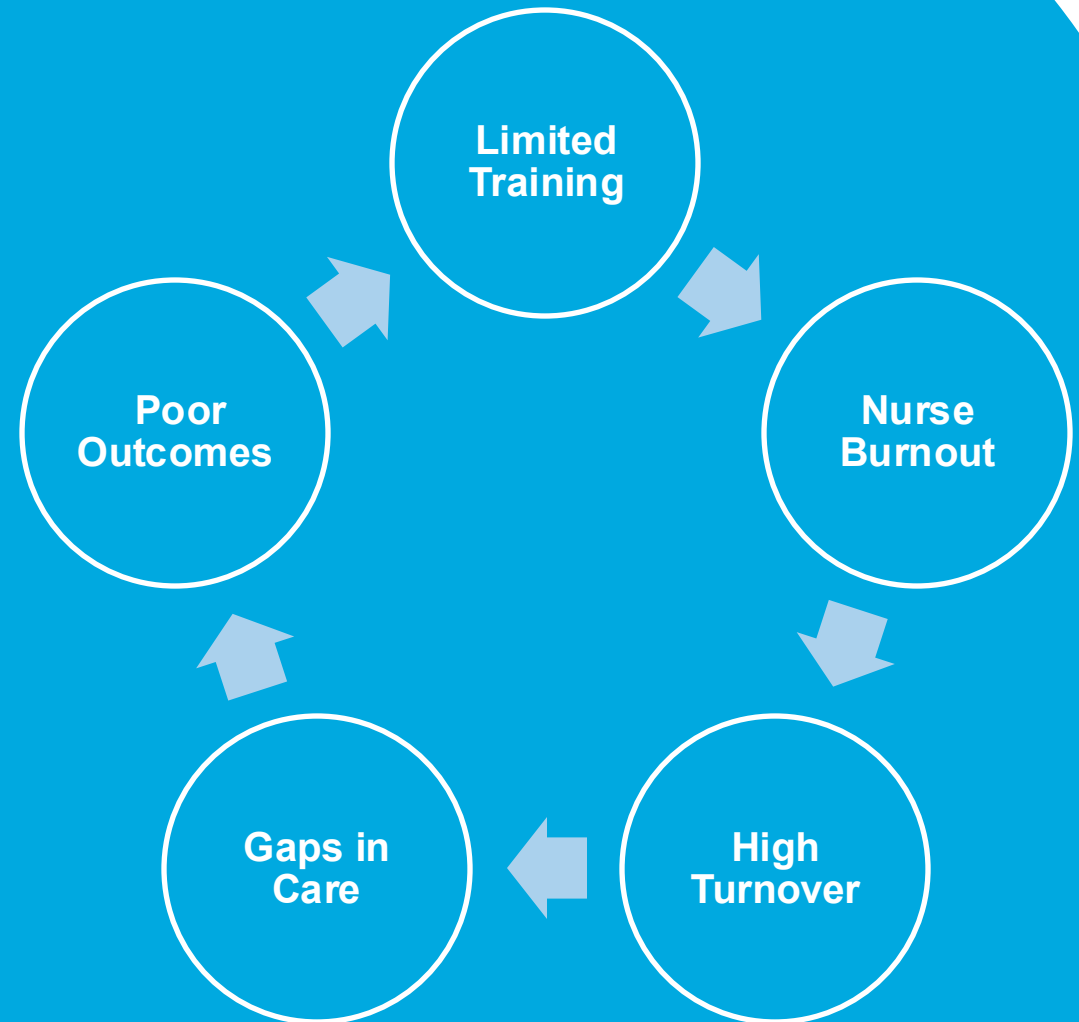
Blue = small rural districts
<1,000 students
Grey = rural districts <6,500 students

147/186 (80%) of school districts in Colorado are considered rural or small rural



Colorado Students AND School Nurses

- Colorado's rural communities are faced with limited access to pediatric care.
- Children with medical complexity require skilled, consistent nursing support.
- Limited training and education for school nurses leads to:
 - Increased burnout and turnover.
 - Gaps in care and support for vulnerable students.
 - Greater inequities in health and academic outcomes.



Identifying the Problem:

2024 Needs Assessment

495/890 responses / 13 regions / > 30% rural / 40% nurses < 4 yrs of experience



As a school nurse in Colorado, what resources do you currently use for your own clinical training and/or guidance?

- CDE school nurse website
- Fellow school nurse colleagues
- CDPHE website



Does your school/district require annual School Health Nursing continuing education? (skills trainings/ competencies checks/ skills validations)

30%- YES
70%- NO



As a new school nurse in Colorado, did you participate in an in-person, hands-on, school nurse skills training?

37%- YES
63%- NO



Seeking a Solution: The Power of Political Advocacy

What is Congressional Directed Spending?

Congressional directed spending is a process where legislators can allocate specific funds to particular projects in their home states or districts, also known as earmarks or community project funding

Colorado Senators:

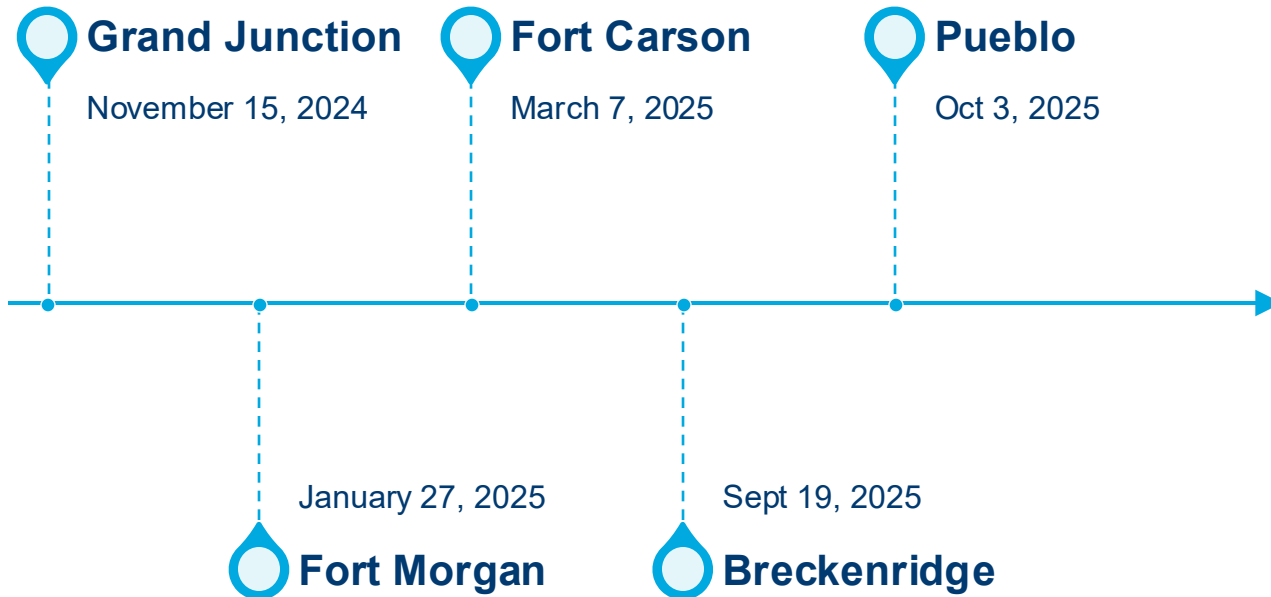


****Awarded \$421k for July 1, 2024-Dec 31, 2025***



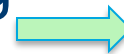
Implementation Plan:

Training Summary: 7-hour training sessions



Totals=

- 304 nurses trained
- 35 hours of training
- 2,576.25 CE hours



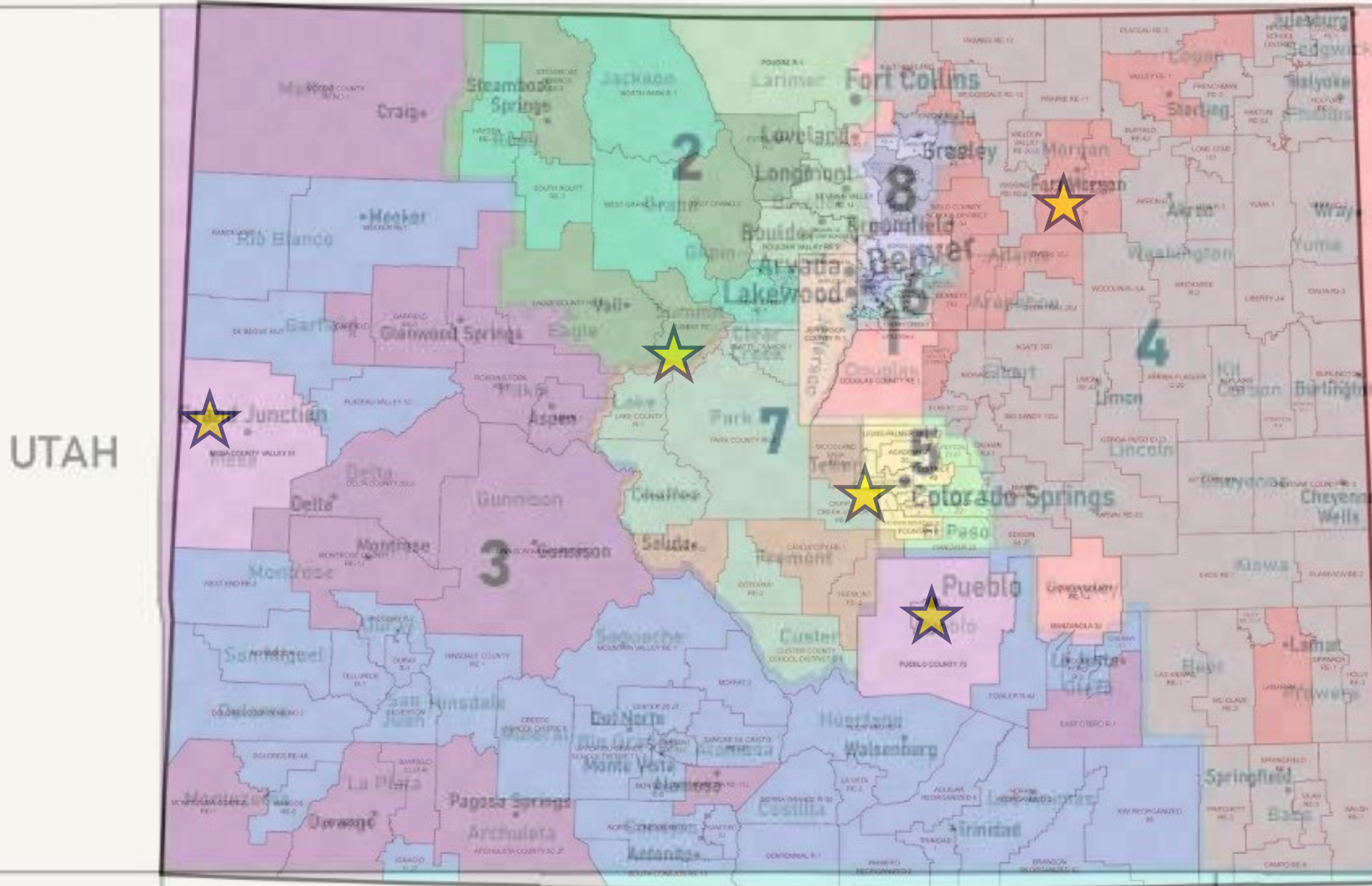
Additional 265+ school nurses trained between CASN conference and 2 urban school districts = Total 569 – approx 64% of all CO SNs



Small Rural Districts: K12 Enrollment <1,000 students (110 Districts)
Rural Districts: K12 Enrollment 1,000 – 6,500 students (37 Districts)

The Colorado School Finance Project
School Districts: Small Rural | Rural | Large

Large Districts: K12 Enrollment >6,501 students (31 Districts)



Data: CDE
February 2023

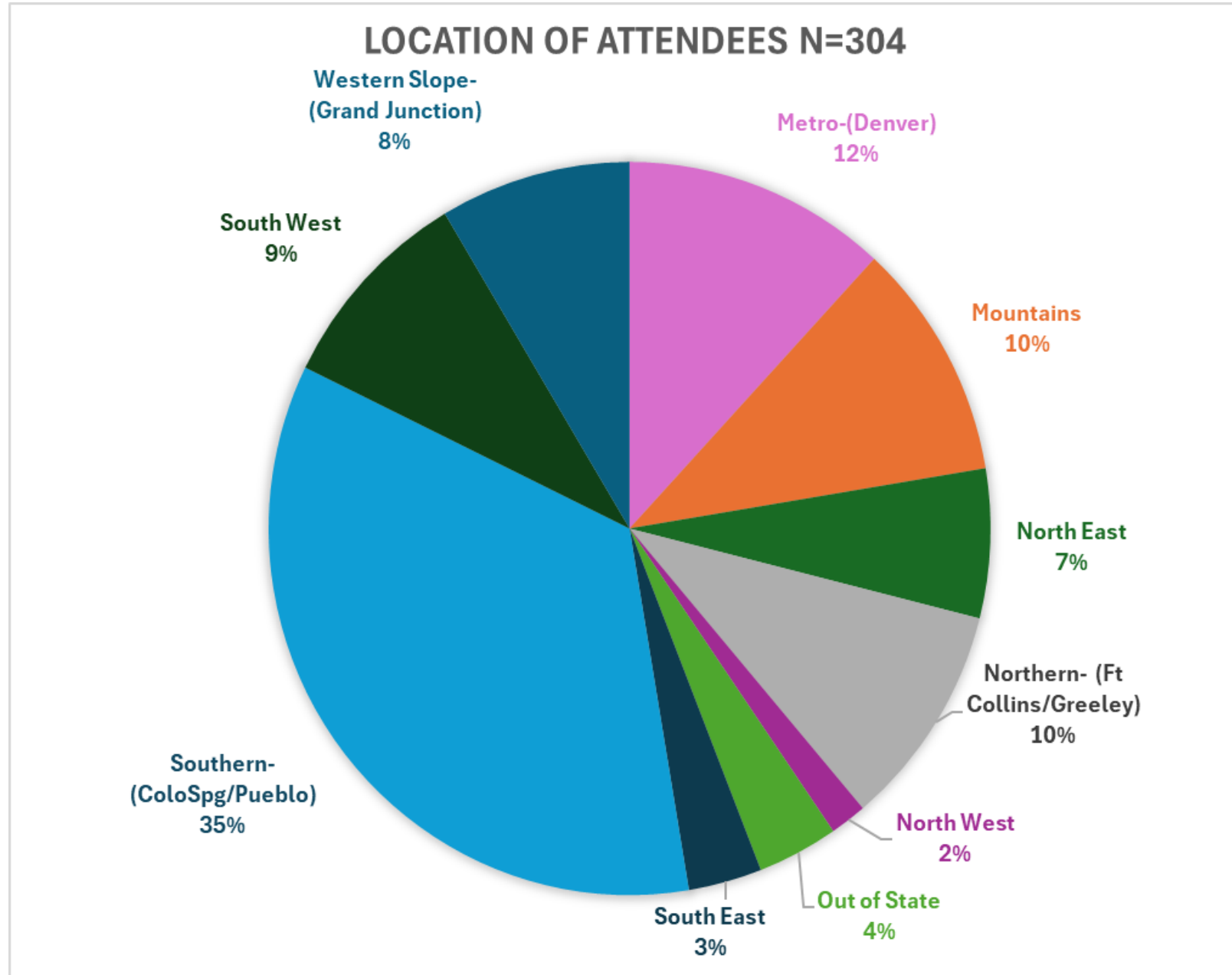
Supply Training Bag Giveaway



\$125 supply bag of training supplies to take back to their schools



Attendance breakdown for all 5 rural trainings:



Outcomes:

Pre/Post Assessment Outcomes for 5 Rural Trainings Combined

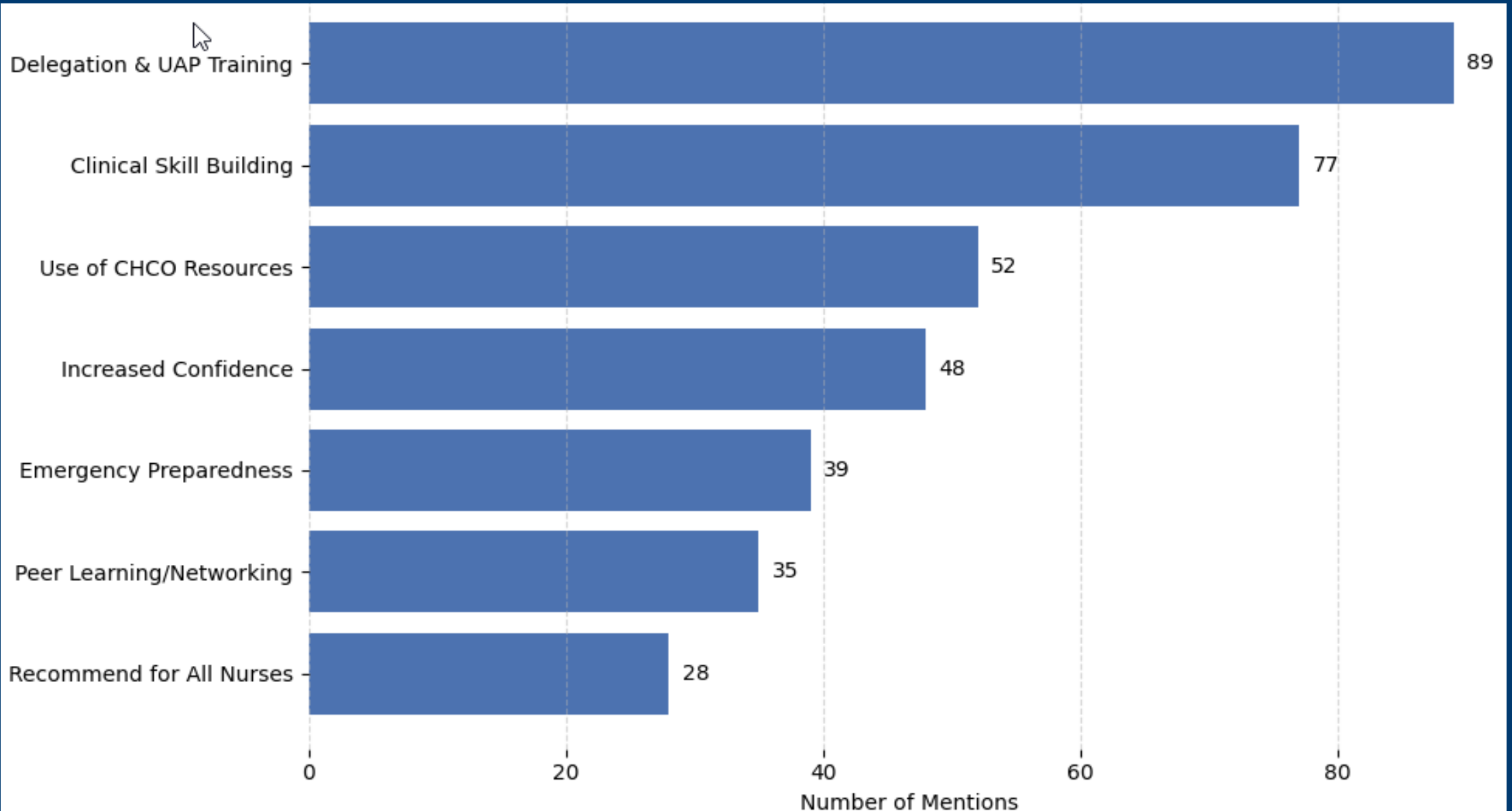
Knowledge, confidence in ability, and comfort in delegating care for a child with:

- Asthma
- Allergies
- Diabetes
- Gastrointestinal conditions
- Genitourinary conditions
- Medication administration
- Medical emergencies
- Seizure
- Tracheostomies and oxygen

	Knowledge (% correct)	Confidence (1-7 Scale)	Comfort (1-7 Scale)
PRE	67%	5.1	5.3
POST	81%	6.2	6.1
% Change	21%	24%	15%



Most Common Qualitative Themes From Feedback



Transformative Impact of the Training:

- Best day of my career!!! of the best trainings I've ever been to in 20 years of nursing.
- I now feel much more confident delegating care and training UAPs.
- I feel more confident with delegation and emergency care.
- This bridged the gap between clinical care and public education.
- Hands-on training made all the difference.
- It reminded me I'm not alone in this work. Networking with peers from rural and urban areas was incredibly helpful.
- "The BEST part of this training was that it was taught by real, working school nurses who understand the real-life hurdles we face. I'm SO proud of your school health program for supporting other nurses and not keeping everything to yourselves. I'm SO proud to be a school nurse in Colorado with access to these incredible resources. This training should be a requirement for becoming a school nurse and included in nursing school practicums. THANK YOU for all you've done-what an amazing opportunity!"

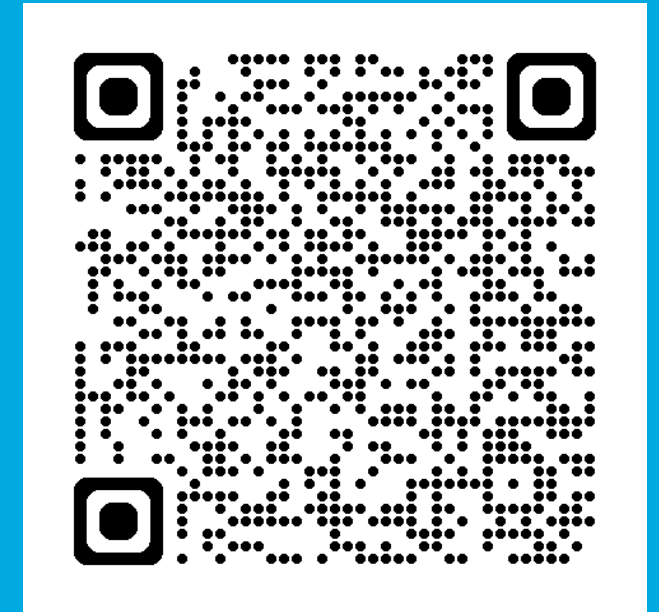
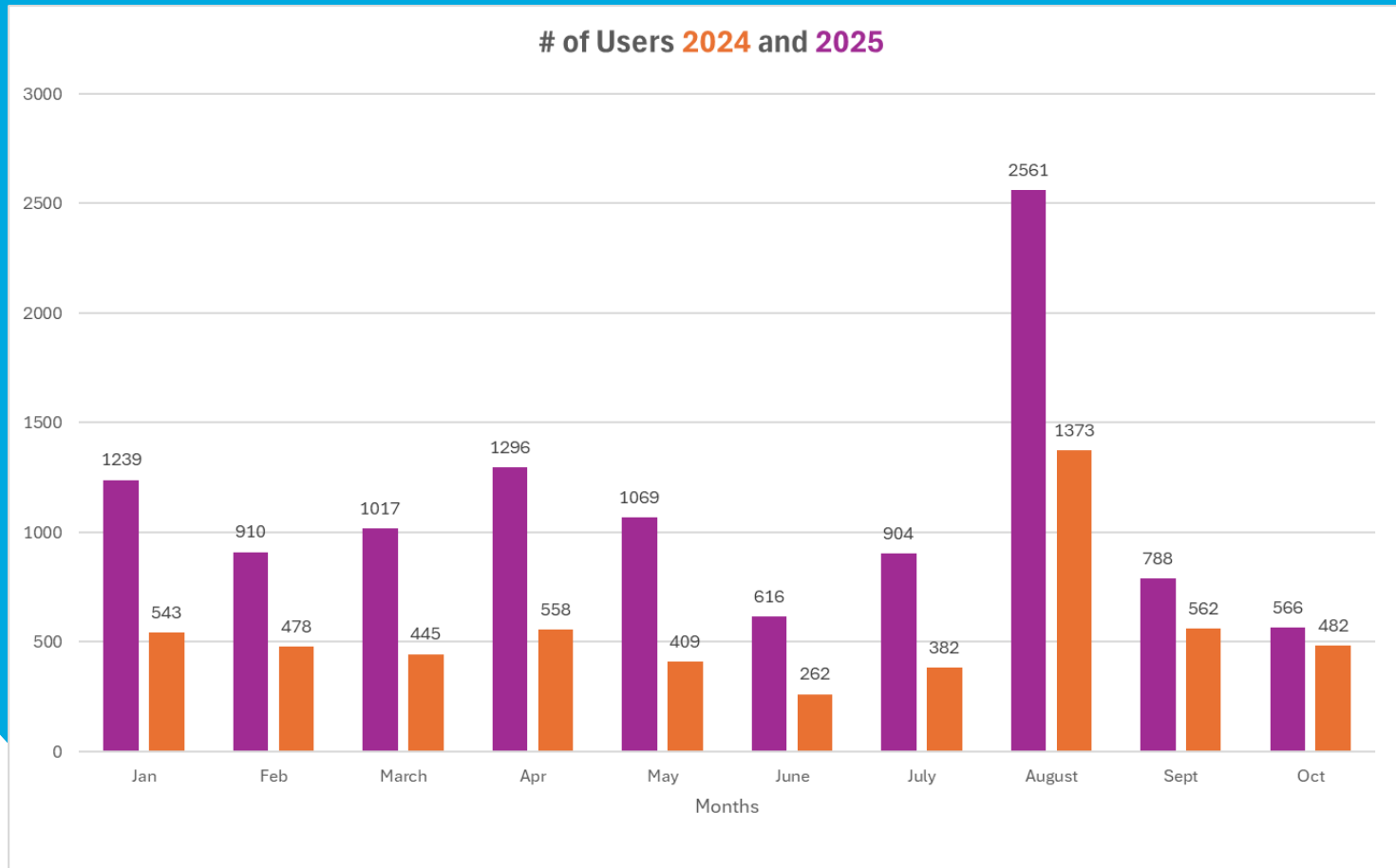


Part 2 of Implementation Plan:

School Nurse Resource Webpage

2025 webpage users = 10,966

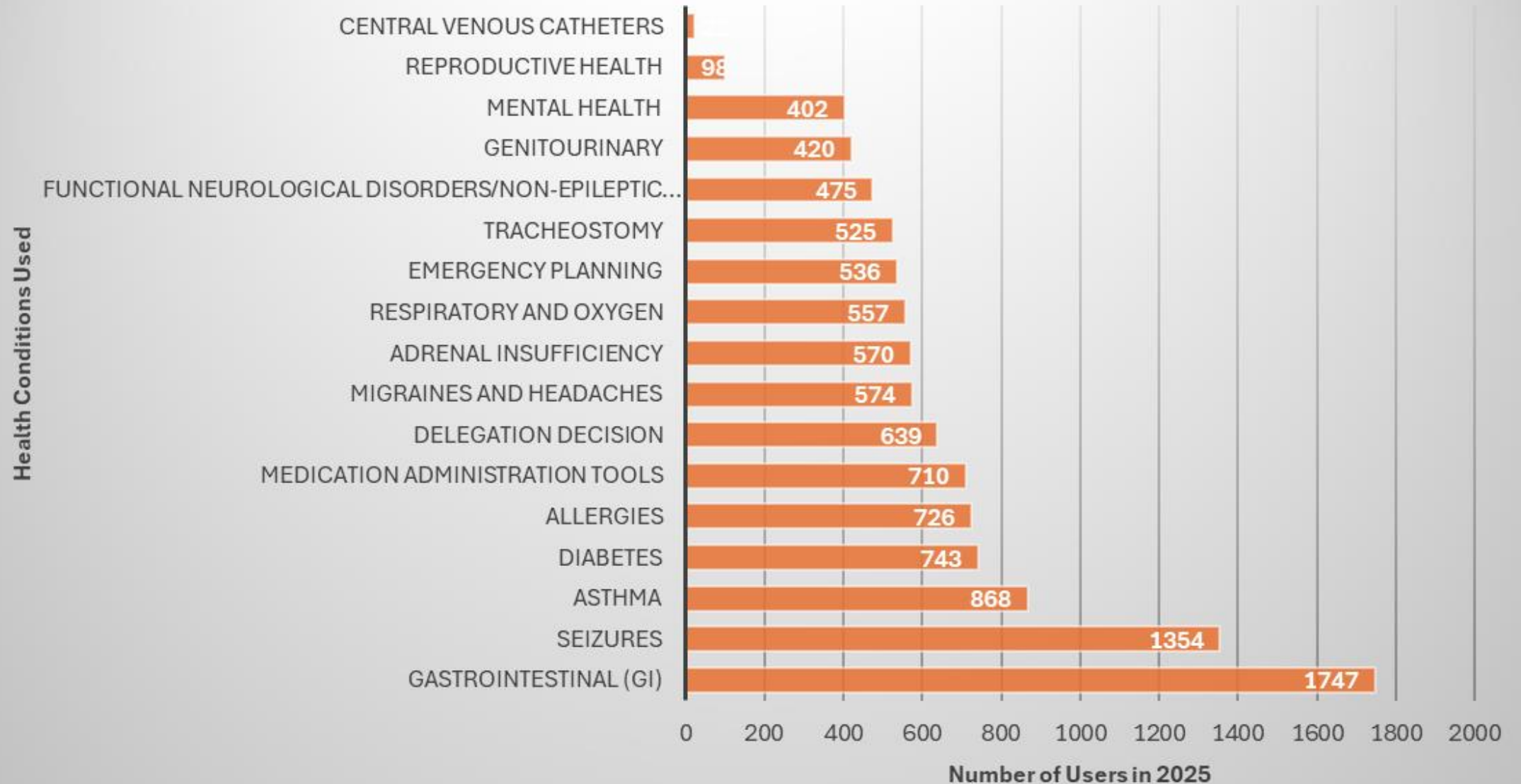
2024 webpage users = 5,494



**Users = clicked far enough on a page and downloaded a document or video*



Health Condition Categories Used in 2025



Phase 2 : The Federal Grant is over, so now what?

Keep the momentum going:

- Children's Hospital Colorado's Foundation is continuously seeking grant and philanthropic opportunities to continue rural trainings.
- Currently School Health Team is building a Level 2 and a Level 3 training.
- Continue Foundational Training (rural training) twice a year with our educational partner, Colorado Department of Education.



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Questions????



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SCHOOL HEALTH SUPPORT: ONE BOOK AT A TIME

Presenting Author Disclosure Information

I have no relevant financial relationships with the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product(s) and/or provider(s) of commercial services discussed in this CME activity.

THE FACTS

ALL INFORMATION BASED ON 2025 DATA



CHILDREN'S NEBRASKA, based in Omaha, Neb., is a 279-bed nonprofit organization caring for children since 1948. Children's is the only full-service pediatric specialty health center in Nebraska providing care in more than 50 pediatric specialties, as well as primary care. Patients are referred from throughout the five-state region and beyond for the treatment of complex childhood diseases. At Children's, no child in need of medical care is ever turned away due to inability to pay.

MISSION:

TO IMPROVE THE LIFE OF EVERY CHILD

*through exceptional Care, Advocacy,
Research and Education*

VALUES:

INNOVATION
COLLABORATION
ACCOUNTABILITY
RESPECT
EXCELLENCE



TOTAL
PATIENT VISITS:

774,215

PRIMARY & SPECIALTY
CLINIC PATIENT VISITS:

456,265

EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT VISITS:

40,321

CARE TODAY
VISITS:

38,722

TOTAL
SURGERY CASES:

18,545

HOSPITAL
ADMISSIONS:

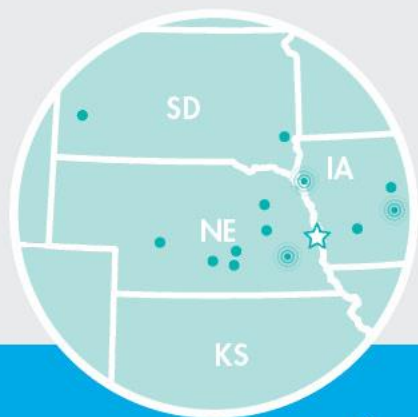
8,573

THE FACTS

ALL INFORMATION BASED ON 2025 DATA



Providing care to children and adolescents across the five-state region and beyond



280+
PEDIATRIC
SPECIALISTS

50+
PEDIATRIC
SPECIALTIES



EXCEPTIONAL PEDIATRIC PRIMARY CARE

286,745 PATIENT VISITS

99,404 CHILDREN SERVED



EXPANDING ACCESS TO PEDIATRIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

Behavioral Health & Wellness Center at Children's

24/7 Crisis Assessment Center
Behavioral Health Inpatient
Behavioral Health Outpatient
Mental Health Partial Hospitalization
Eating Disorders Partial Hospitalization

Behavioral Health Urgent Care — Kearney

Providing care to children or adolescents up to 22 years old experiencing signs of a behavioral or mental health crisis.

26,625

TOTAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PATIENT VISITS AT CHILDREN'S NEBRASKA

819

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS AT CHILDREN'S NEBRASKA FOR BEHAVIORAL OR MENTAL HEALTH REASONS

1,092

TOTAL PATIENT VISITS AT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH URGENT CARE - KEARNEY

CHILDREN'S NEBRASKA

OUR MISSION



TO IMPROVE THE LIFE OF EVERY CHILD
THROUGH EXCEPTIONAL **CARE, ADVOCACY,
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

School Health Support: One Book at a Time

Learning Objectives

A Tale of Two Books: From Hospital to Hallways

- Infectious Diseases & Pediatric Mental Health

- **Define** the purpose, scope and target audience
- **Identify** potential collaborators, contributors, and organizational partners who can enhance content, quality and reach.
- **Integrate** diverse resources to enrich content
- **Discuss** lessons learned to refine ongoing work and strengthen future professional endeavors



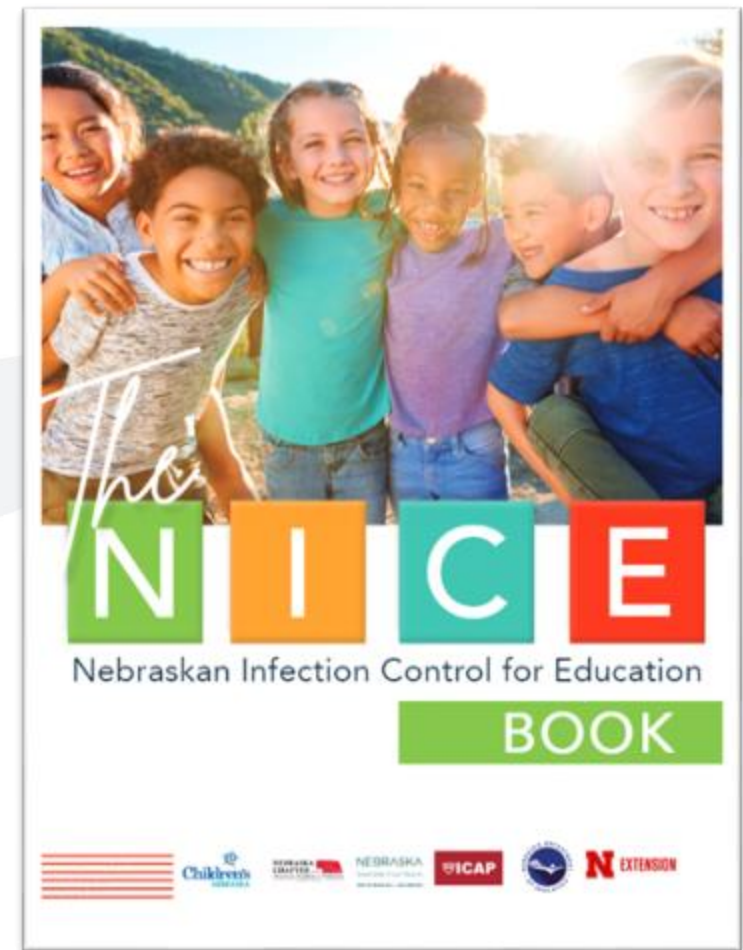
Our Story: Book 1

Why we created the NICE Book

- Nebraskan Infection Control for Education

How the NICE Book has been used to improve infection prevention at school

A Tale of Partnership & Trust Building



Book 1: The Problem & Opportunity

- Rural Health Disparities
 - Many rural schools don't have a nurse
 - Some rural schools have a nurse but no physician in town
 - Smaller districts don't have the same access to resources as metro areas do, but still serve a diverse population
- School-Specific Health information is difficult to find
- Secured AAP's Managing Infectious Diseases in Schools Chapter Innovation Grant

Our Vision: A New Manual for Schools

- Create a manual for school nurses with school nurse input
- Fill in the gaps of knowledge, a comprehensive 1-stop shop
- Make it free and accessible to everyone
- Center on health equity
- Make it visually engaging and easy to understand
- Focus on staff safety as well as student health



Our Vision: Bring it home to Nebraska

- Use Nebraska data to give context
- Let students show their talent
 - Handwashing poster contest
- Listen to School Nurses on what they want and need for their schools
- Develop tools and resources that any school can pick up and use
- Have a fun name!



The Partnerships

Key Agency Partners:

- Department of Health & Human Services
- Infection Control & Prevention
- Nebraska Department of Education
- Nebraska AAP Chapter
- Nebraska Extension
- Children's Nebraska
- Many other individuals, such as School Nurse Advisors and interpreters
- Dr. Alice Sato as Medical Editor



The NICE Book Contents

**LET
US
HELP...**



PART 1
PREVENTION

07



PART 2
OUTBREAKS

43



PART 3
IMMUNIZATION

71



PART 4
INFECTIOUS
DISEASES AND PESTS

87



PART 5
BLOODBORNE
PATHOGENS

183



PART 6
RESOURCES

199

Tools for Schools:

- Handwashing poster pack
- Customizable cleaning schedule
- Handouts for parents in English and Spanish on:
 - COVID-19
 - Head lice
 - HFMD
 - Influenza
 - MRSA
 - Norovirus
 - Pinkeye
 - Ticks
 - Vaccine requirements for school
 - When to Keep Your Student Home Sick

School Nurse Feedback: 5 STAR Review



What do you like most about the book?

all of it

The wide variety of helpful information and **pictures** of certain illnesses and diseases.

Color **photos** of clinical presentation-concise summary of school nurse actions

The **pictures** and quick tips and advice!!

Part 4 management of infectious disease

Colorful information sheets

It's so **complete** and informative!

How easy it is to understand.

Visuals

How **detailed** it is!!

What tool or handout do you see your school using the most?

all of them

Headlice, pinkeye and handwashing info

Pink eye, impetigo, lice, bed bugs

All of it, especially diseases

Part 4

Many, head lice, bedbugs, common cold

All of it, not just one specific one!

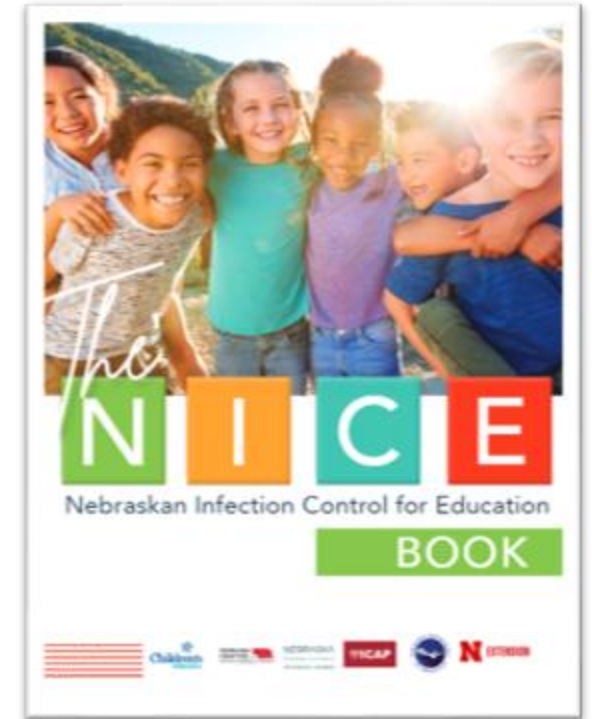
The information in the book.

Sharing with our PRT and other EC teams

*Visual Appeal
Comprehensive*

The NICE Book Impact

- Completed in 4 months (record breaking speed!!)
- Accessed online over 3,000 times (2024)
- Distributed to 1030 school buildings
 - AAP grant covered printing for 500 rural schools
 - Additional funding secured for remaining districts
 - Every district had access, public and private
 - Potentially protecting 328,649 children enrolled in schools (SY23/24)
- Given to all 19 Local Health Departments and 17 Educational Service Units
 - One LHD secured funding to print and distribute to 72 child care centers



School Nurse Feedback:

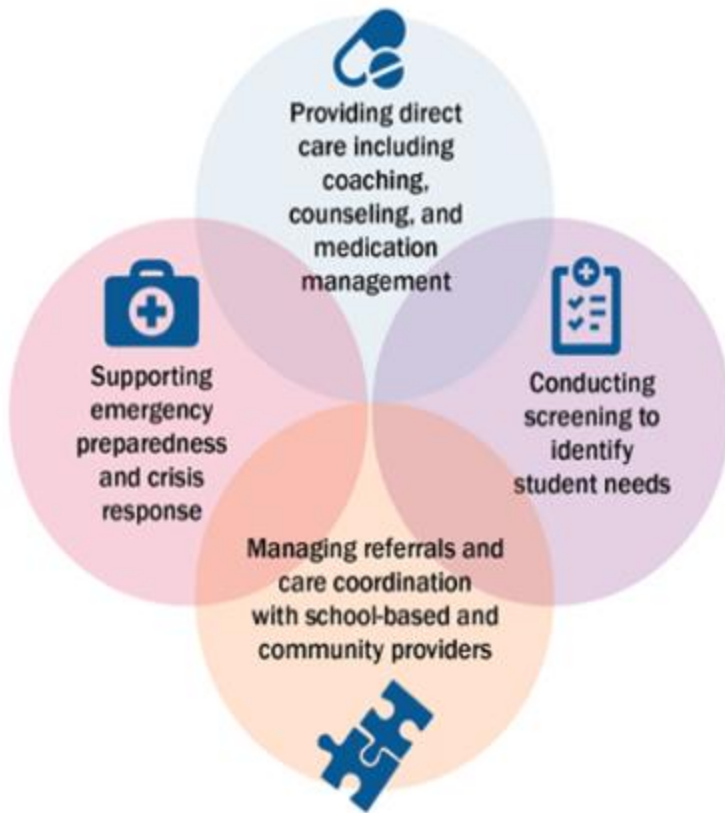
"Thank you so much for creating and distributing the NICE book. It is a wonderful resource. **I serve rural school twice weekly and on a day that I wasn't there, the secretary used the pink eye information for a Spanish speaking family** — such a great help! Our ESU 8 nursing department met yesterday and we were all amazed by all the work you must have done to put it all together. This will be something that won't just sit on a shelf!"

"I received my Nice book today!!! I cannot thank you and your team enough for putting this together! What an AWESOME resource you have made for us school nurses! I absolutely love it and love and **appreciate that you've even included pictures of different diseases that we need to be on the lookout for! I'm so happy to have a reference at my fingertips now!** I'm excited to put your book to use! Thanks again!!!!"

"Hello, I just wanted to reach out and congratulate you on such an AMAZING resource you have created! I skimmed through the online NICE document and it is jam packed with so much helpful information and guidance! We, **NE school nurses across the state, are so very grateful for all the work you do and share with us so we can better support our students and communities!** Thankyou thank you and congratulations again! 😊 "

Book 2: The Problem & Opportunity

School nurses are key members of SBMH care teams and support student mental and behavioral health by...

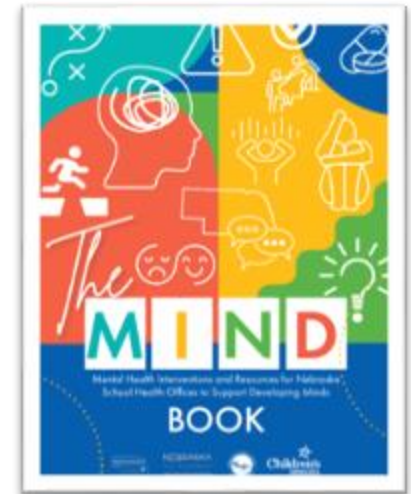


- School nurses report spending approximately **33%** of their time addressing student mental health issues. PubMed Central
- In high school settings, some nurses report dedicating **two-thirds to three-quarters** of their time to mental health concerns. Education Week
- **Nebraska School Nurses asked for it!**

The Vision: MIND Book

Comprehensive resource guide on mental health written for the health office (school nurses and paras) to increase their capacity to support students with mental and behavioral health challenges.

- ★ **Free:** Will be available for all schools, online and print
- ★ **Up-to-date and data driven:** includes latest information on mental health conditions, resources and best practices
- ★ **Representational:** Created by Nebraska School Nurses and other health, education and mental health professionals
- ★ **Relevant:** topics were voted on by committee for inclusion
- ★ **Actionable:** includes easy-to-use tools, strategies and resources for help at your fingertips
- ★ **Accessible:** available digitally and in print
- ★ **While written with school health offices in mind, this guide will be a useful tool for anyone working with youth**



How the MIND Book was Developed

- **Funding secured** from a Pediatric Mental Health Access Grant called NEP-MAP
- **Partnered with Consultants** to ensure efficiency and timely project development
- **Recruited School Nurses** and other education and health professionals to volunteer on advisory committee
- **Secured Subject Matter Experts** to author chapters
- **Leveraged state-level partnerships (NDE & DHHS)**
- **Included Children's Behavioral Health and Marketing/Communication** team in the review process



*Designed with school
nurses in mind!*

Nebraska Voices: why they matter

- Grounds the resource in real-world experience
- Increases relevance and usability
- Builds credibility and trust
- Highlights gaps and needs
- Fosters shared ownership



How the MIND Book is structured



Chapter 04 
CRISIS SUPPORT

Chapter 03 
CONDITIONS

Chapter 02 
CHALLENGES

Chapter 01 
STRATEGIES

Structured to follow the MTSS Framework

MTSS: Multi-Tiered System of Support

Sample MIND Book Tools

MENTAL HEALTH CHEAT SHEET

for Panic/Anxiety Attack

Here is a resource for office staff to use in the event that the school nurse is not available.

PANIC/ANXIETY ATTACK

Anxiety attacks can cause a variety of physical and psychological symptoms, including:

Physical symptoms

→ A racing or pounding heartbeat, sweating, trembling or shaking, shortness of breath or hyperventilation, chest pain, stomach distress, dizziness or lightheadedness, and numbness or tingling.

Psychological symptoms

→ Feeling faint, dizzy or lightheaded, feeling that you're losing control, a sense of impending danger, panic or doom.

Gut-related issues

→ Nausea, stomach cramps, loss of appetite, diarrhea or constipation, indigestion.

Shaking

→ You might feel your hands and fingers start to shake and find it difficult to hold small objects.

Trouble sleeping

→ Anxiety disorders can cause trouble sleeping.

IF A STUDENT APPEARS TO BE HAVING A PANIC/ANXIETY ATTACK:

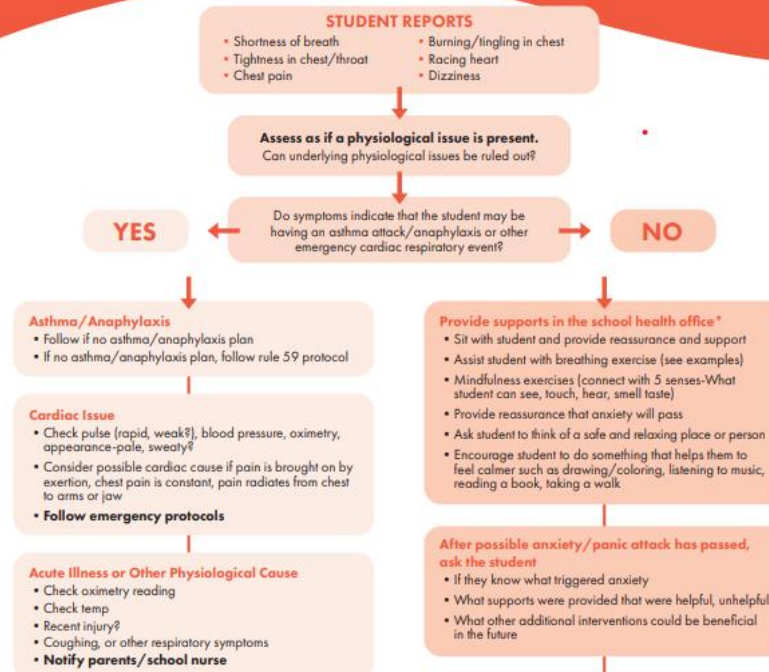
DO:

- Give them a stress ball or something from the fidget basket
- Elementary student - Call: _____ [insert contact name and telephone/extension]
- Middle/Junior High/High School student - Call: _____ [insert contact name and telephone/extension]
- Have them do a grounding exercise until counselor/admin arrives:
 - Breathe deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth two times.
 - Slowly look around you and find the following:
 - 5 things you can see. Say them out loud. Say them to yourself if you are not able to say them aloud.
 - 4 things you can hear. Say them out loud. Say them to yourself if you are not able to say them aloud.
 - 3 things you can feel/touch. Say them out loud. Say them to yourself if you are not able to say them aloud.
 - 2 things you can smell, or like the smell of. Say them out loud. Say them to yourself if you are not able to say them aloud.
 - 1 emotion you feel. Say them out loud. Say them to yourself if you are not able to say them aloud.
 - Breathe deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth two times.

— SERVA BOWEN

RESPIRATORY FLOWCHART

Respiratory or cardiovascular symptoms: The following flowchart outlines suggestions for what to do when a student comes to the school health office with respiratory or cardiovascular symptoms.



*If student has a diagnosis of anxiety/panic attacks and has a history of needing support due to physical symptoms/etc, then individualized plan might not include in depth assessment to rule out underlying physiological causes.

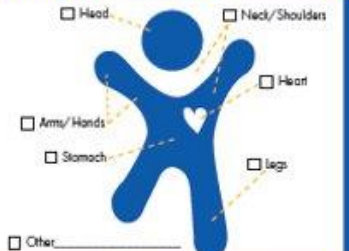
FEELINGS CHECK-IN

What feelings are you having right now?

Please check all of the answers that apply.



I feel the emotions in my...



How are you feeling physically?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Headache | ☐ Bleeding |
| ☐ Stomach Ache | ☐ Rash |
| ☐ Sore Throat | ☐ Difficulty Breathing |
| ☐ Hungry or Thirsty | ☐ Broken Tooth |
| ☐ Vomiting/Nausea | ☐ Bathroom Problems |
| ☐ Fever | ☐ Menstrual Cramps |
| ☐ Tired | ☐ _____ |
| ☐ Injury - describe where on your body: _____ | |

The feeling is...

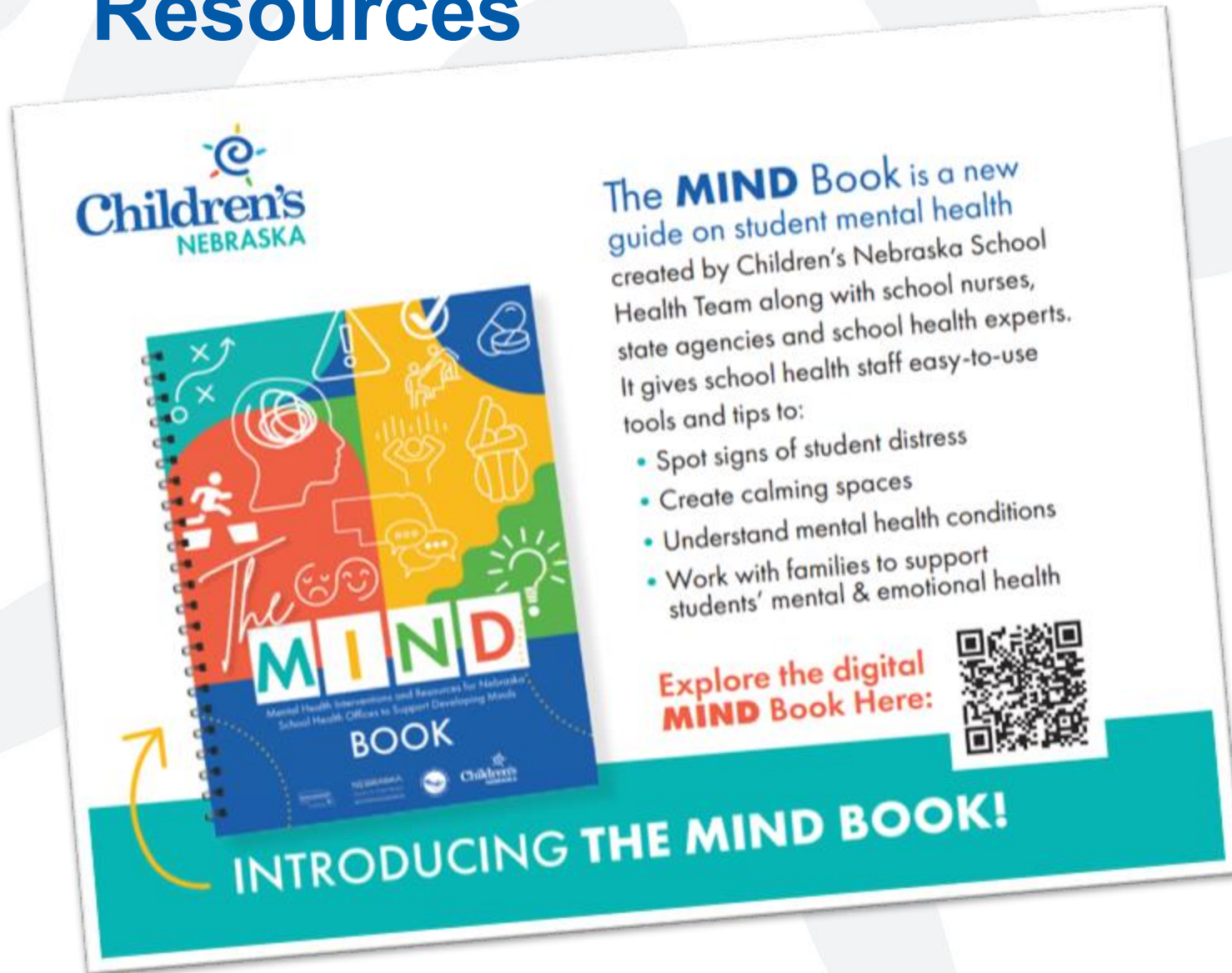


Notes:

Children's
NEBRASKA

Children's
NEBRASKA

MIND Book Digital Resources



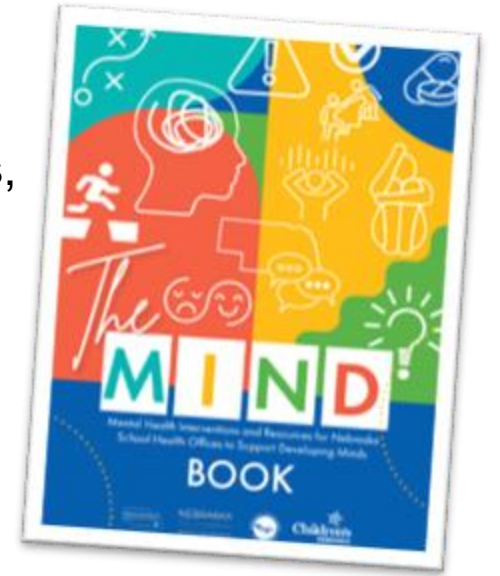
MIND Book Feedback: Happy Partners, Happy School Nurses

"I just wanted to tell you how impressed I am with the MIND book! The content, graphics, examples, etc. all came together so well! **This resource will have a long lasting impact on students, staff, and communities.**"- NDE School Safety

"Wow!!!!!! What an **amazing resource!!!**"- ESU School Mental Health Coordinator

"This is an incredible resource. Thank you so much to you and your team for the work that went into making it a reality. **I'm especially grateful that you included a section on brain injury**—it means a great deal." - NE Brain Injury Association Executive Director

"**I really do love this book.** It is going to be so helpful for so many, not just school nurses. I think it has some **great tips and tricks in it for even our school counselors.** This is a great resource and much needed." - NE School Nurse



A Tale of Two Books: Unexpected Consequences

- Included in Magnet with Distinction Application
- Opportunities to Present Nationally
- Feedback asking for more resources:
 - SHARE Books are next on Chronic Condition Management
 - Parent resources for the MIND Book requested
 - Secured more funding support



A Tale of Two Books: Lessons Learned

- Say YES to collaborative projects and build partnerships to advance school health
 - Engage State Agencies, Prof. Orgs, School Nurses, Youth (yes... it will take longer and yes, it is worth it)
- Keep the end user in mind – easy to find/read/share
- Schedule updates
- Leverage expertise – yet have one voice
- Expand access in multiple languages and consider cultural needs
- Youth engagement adds FUN and local connection
- Strong project manager and designer



Thank You!

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