



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

# School Health Program

2024-2025 Program Summary



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH &  
SENIOR SERVICES**



## ***School Health Program Meet the Team:***

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## ***Abbreviations:***

ADD/ADHD — Attention-deficit disorder / Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

ADN — Associate degree in nursing

ASD — Autism spectrum disorder

BA/BS/BSN — Bachelor of arts / Bachelor of science / Bachelor of science in nursing

CERP — Cardiac Emergency Response Plan

DESE — Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DHSS — Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

DNAR — Do not attempt resuscitation

EMS — Emergency medical services

EMSC — Emergency Medical Services for Children

FM system — Frequency modulation hearing system

IHP — Individualized health plan

LPN — Licensed practical nurse

MA/MS/MSN — Master of arts / Master of science / Master of science in nursing

MHS — Missouri Healthy Schools

NCSN — Nationally certified school nurse

N.E.W.S. — Nurse Education Webinar Series

PTSD — Post-traumatic stress disorder

RN — Registered nurse

SB166 — Missouri Senate Bill 166

SHORS — School Health Online Reporting System

SSNC — State School Nurse Consultant

*This report was made possible by all the Missouri School Nurses and staff who report yearly to  
make sure Every Student Counts!*

# School Health Program



## VISION

To create a future where every Missouri student thrives in a healthy, safe and supportive learning environment, guided by the expertise of school nurses and strengthened through the power of data-driven decisions.

## PURPOSE

The School Health Program provides support and resources to all Missouri's public, charter, private and parochial school districts. This statewide program focuses on workforce development and the adoption of evidence-based policies and practices for individuals working with students within the school setting.

## MISSION

To empower school nurses as essential leaders in student health by strengthening data-driven decision-making. To highlight the impact of school nursing, and guide policies and practices that foster safe, healthy and supportive learning environments across Missouri.

## 2024–2025 Priorities and Accomplishments

| 2024–2025 Priorities                                                                         | Key Accomplishments                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Achieve 100% participation in data collection (Staffing & Special Health Condition Surveys). | Achieved 97% Staffing Survey response rate and 90% Special Health Conditions Survey |
| Fill the State School Nurse Consultant (SSNC) position.                                      | New School Nurse Orientation Manual published.                                      |
| Publish New School Nurse Orientation Manual.                                                 | SSNC position filled (September 1, 2025).                                           |
| Publish Substitute School Nurse Manual.                                                      | New Substitute School Nurse Manual published.                                       |
| Prepare for SB166 implementation and expand CERP training.                                   | SB166 implementation goals met and ongoing.                                         |
| Establish collaborations with Pattonville School District                                    | Strong collaborations with Pattonville School district established.                 |



## Core Services Provided

- Orientation and Substitute School Nurse Manuals.
- In-person school visits for support and consultation.
- Connecting school nurses with Missouri state health resources.
- Distribution of lice kits.

## Grant Work and Community Outreach

| Grant Work                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Community Outreach                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MHS work with Pattonville School District</li> <li>• DESE Feminine Hygiene Grant outreach</li> <li>• CERP collaboration with Missouri EMS Association</li> <li>• Additional grant-supported initiatives</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upstream mapping projects and initiatives</li> <li>• Participation in EMSC Advisory Council</li> <li>• Engagement in state and professional conferences</li> <li>• Recruitment of expert speakers for webinar programming</li> </ul> |



### School Health Program Funding

- Health Resources and Services Administration, Title V Maternal Child Health Services Block Grant. *Title V of the Social Security Act (SSA; P.L. 74-271, as amended; 42 U.S.C. §§701-709)*

# Professional Development



## Health Office Orientation

One-day workshop offers a hands-on orientation for staff without prior work experience in schools and an overview of information regarding school nurse practice.



Health Aids

LPNs

RNs



## Lead School Nurse Collaborative: Health Office Management

97

District Lead Nurses

This Lead School Nurse meeting is a collaborative gathering of lead nurses from districts across Missouri. It provides a dedicated space to share updates from public health partners, review best practices, discuss challenges in school health services, and align on district and state level goals.

## Show Me School Health Website Data - Most Viewed Pages

- Resources
- MIZZOU Continuing Education for Health Professionals
- Continuing Education Courses
- Managing Encopresis in Schools
- Diapering and Toileting Considerations
- Gastrostomy Tubes
- Educational Events
- Tracheostomy
- Gastrostomy Tube Feedings
- How We Serve School Nurses
- Dressing Change Using Clean Technique
- Urinary Catheterization



## New Lead School Nurse Collaborative: New Leadership Management

A half-day training designed to equip new lead nurses with foundational knowledge, confidence and a professional support network.

24

Participants

## Annual School Health Program Supported Activities

25

Nurse Education Webinar Series (N.E.W.S)

25

News You Can Use Newsletter

690

1:1 Technical Assistance Support

## N.E.W.S - 25 Sessions Hosted

Weekly one hour professional development webinars to strengthen clinical knowledge, policy understanding and school health practice. Average participation: 82 nurses.

## News You Can Use Newsletter - 25 Issues

Weekly digital newsletter offering practical resources, state updates and tools to support school nurse practice. Average participation: 2,439 subscribers

## 1:1 Technical Assistance Support - 690 nurses

The School Health Program received individual technical assistance requests from nurses and health personnel, including support with SHORS reporting, policy interpretation, data guidance, school nurse practice questions and district specific needs. SHP provides timely, individualized assistance to strengthen school health services across Missouri.

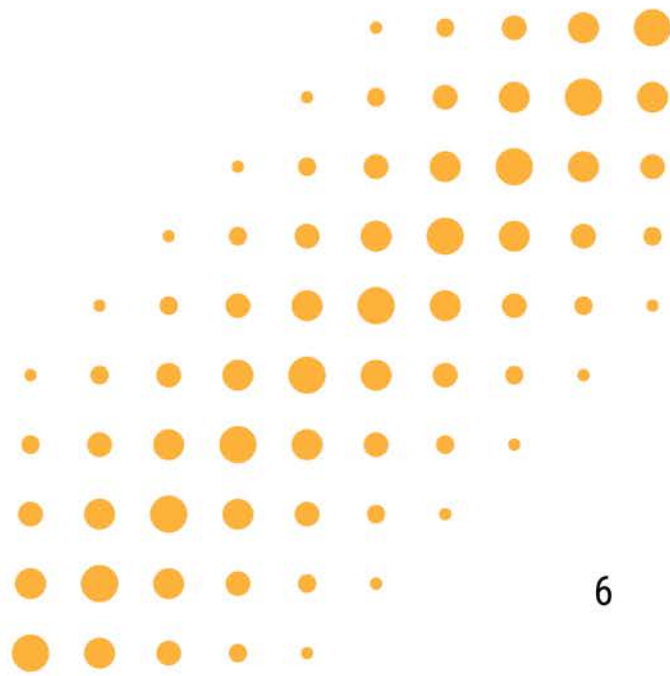
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# Data Collection

Data collection is one of the most powerful tools school nurses have to demonstrate their impact on student health and academic success. For Missouri school nurses, consistent and accurate data highlights the direct connection between student well-being and learning, supports evidence-based decision-making, and helps advocate for resources, staffing and policy changes at the district and state levels. Collecting and analyzing data provides a clearer picture of student health trends, identifies gaps in care, and ensures that nurses' work is visible, measurable and valued.

At the same time, there are limitations that must be acknowledged. School nurses often face time constraints, balancing direct student care with documentation demands. Some health conditions or interventions are challenging to measure consistently, and underreporting may occur when workloads are heavy. Additionally, data may not always capture the full scope of a nurse's role- such as relationship building, crisis prevention, or emotional support.

By recognizing both the importance and limitations of data collection, Missouri school nurses can continue to refine their practices, advocate for improved systems, and ensure that the essential work they do is accurately reflected and understood.



# Methodology

The School Health Services Online Reporting System, developed by the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), provides a more efficient system for all schools to report information requested by DHSS and other state agencies. This information identifies trends, facilitates planning of state resources and ensures up-to-date communication with lead nurses in Missouri schools.

School district lead nurses, Health Service Supervisors, or members of the district's data reporting teams submit required reports annually via SHORS. If assistance is needed, a step-by-step SHORS guide is available online with screen-shots and instructions to walk users through each report. Data must be entered and submitted by the following schedule, to be included in state-wide analysis.

**SCHOOL HEALTH  
ONLINE  
REPORTING  
UPCOMING  
SCHEDULE**

|                   |                                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>01</b><br>SEPT | <b>STAFFING REPORT</b>                      |
| <b>01</b><br>OCT  | <b>SPECIAL HEALTH CARE<br/>NEEDS SURVEY</b> |
| <b>01</b><br>JUN  | <b>STUDENT ENCOUNTERS<br/>AND OUTCOMES</b>  |

[www.health.mo.gov](http://www.health.mo.gov)



**These reports are more than numbers, they tell the story of Missouri students' health and success.**

By compiling the data shared by nurses, we can better understand the needs of Missouri's students, identify trends, and highlight the critical role school nurses play in supporting student health and academic success. This information is also used to inform state-level decision-making, advocate for resources and demonstrate the impact of school nursing on student outcomes. Data paints the bigger picture of school health in Missouri and helps ensure that every student has the support they need to thrive.

## **Staffing Survey**

The Staffing Survey is an annual survey DHSS uses to identify statewide school health staffing information on health aides, health clerks, LPNs, RNs, and social workers. This data is used to calculate the nurse-to-student ratio and update the list of lead contacts/nurses for Missouri schools. Completion of this survey is invaluable.

## **Special Health Care Needs**

The Special Health Care Needs Survey is an annual statewide survey used by DHSS to track information regarding common health conditions affecting Missouri's school-aged children. DHSS uses the data collected to identify trends and assist with resource allocation.

## **Student Encounter and Outcomes**

The Student Encounter and Outcomes data tracks the total number of visits to the health office each year and records how those visits are resolved - whether students return to class, are sent home or require emergency care.

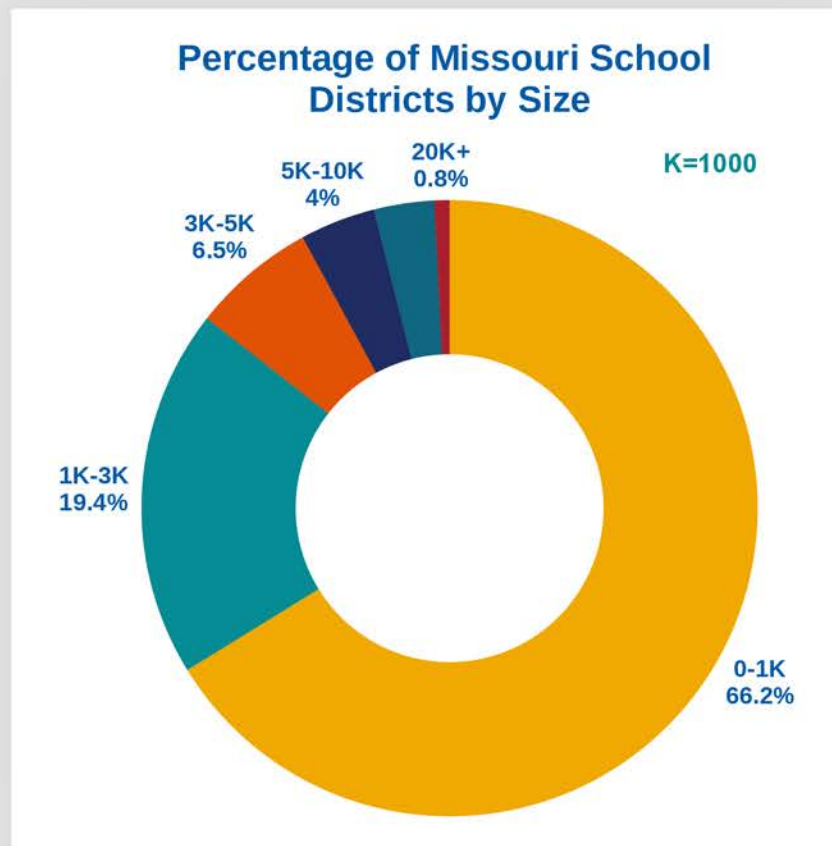
# Missouri Schools

## Missouri School Districts Analysis

Missouri school districts vary widely in size, from small rural districts serving fewer than 200 students to large urban districts with enrollments exceeding 20,000. The majority of districts fall on the smaller end of the spectrum. Over half of Missouri's districts educate fewer than 1,000 students. Medium-sized districts (1,000–4,999 students) make up a significant portion of the state's schools, while only a small percentage of districts serve more than 10,000 students.

This distribution highlights the diversity of needs across the state:

- Small districts often operate with limited resources and may have only one school nurse covering multiple buildings.
- Medium districts typically balance moderate staffing with a mix of rural and suburban student populations.
- Large districts require complex health service systems to support thousands of students across multiple schools.



Understanding district size is critical when analyzing staffing patterns, health encounter data, and resource allocation to ensure support for all Missouri students.

## Staffing Survey Results



**School Districts  
Responded**

**542 out of 558 public school  
districts and charter schools  
responded to our survey.**

542 of 558 school districts reported data representing a student population of 893,012. Staffing patterns show that 66% of schools are staffed by Registered Nurses (RNs), 19% by Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and 15% by health aides or clerks. There are 1,596 full-time RNs, resulting in a RN to student ratio of 1:560. When combined with LPNs, the ratio improves to 1:431.

Among school health professionals, 915 hold a BA/BS/BSN degree, 415 have an Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN), 181 hold a diploma in nursing, 80 hold a Master's Degree (MS/MA/MSN), and 5 hold a Doctorate.

Today, Missouri school nurses are recognized as frontline public health professionals—providing not just first aid, but also chronic condition management, mental health support, and advocacy for safe learning environments.

From their beginnings as communicable disease monitors in the early 1900s to their current role as comprehensive health leaders, Missouri's school nurses have continually adapted to meet the changing health needs of children. Their work ensures that students are healthy, safe, and ready to learn.



*Pictured: Lina Rogers, the first school nurse, is placed in a public school in the U.S.*



# STATE OF MISSOURI SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES STAFFING 2024-2025

Data collected from the School Health Online Reporting system (SHORS)

*Every student counts!*

## 2024-2025 School Nurse Staff



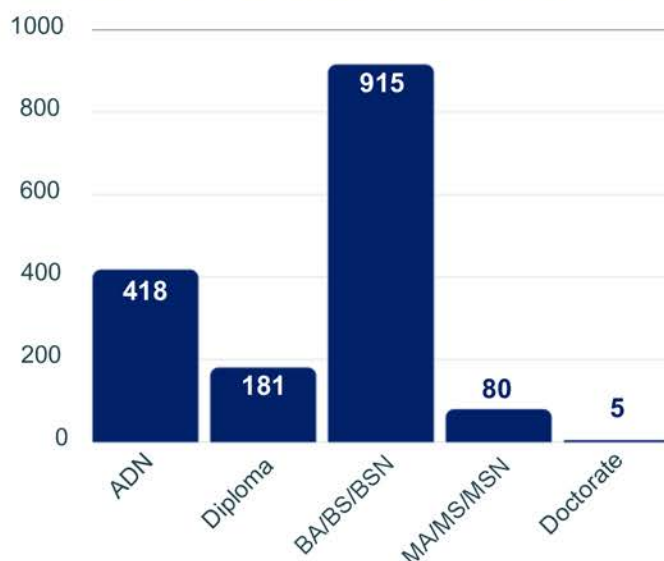
Student Population of Reporting Schools

**893,012 students**

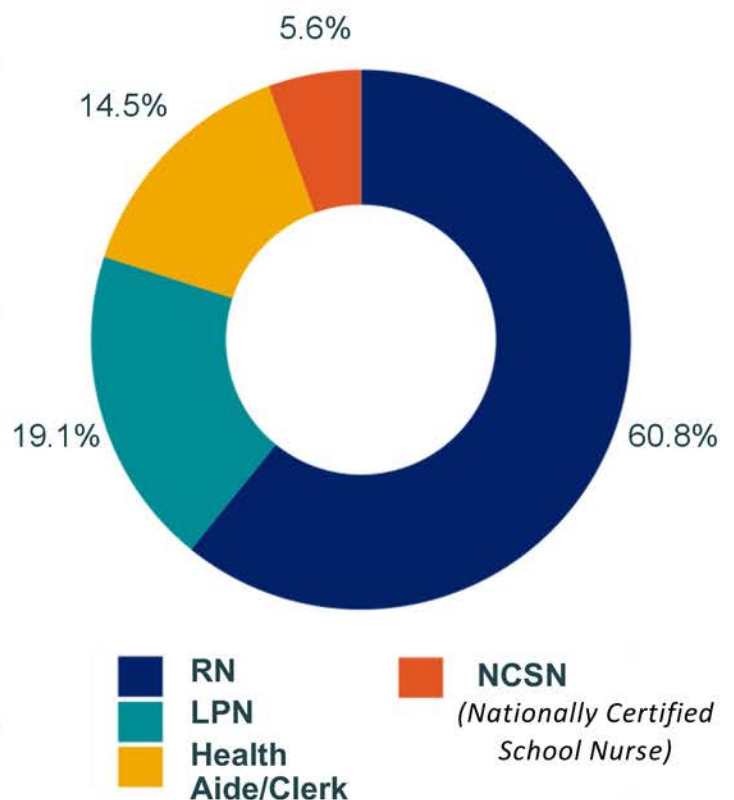
## Nurse-to-Student Ratio



## Professional Health Services Staff by Degree



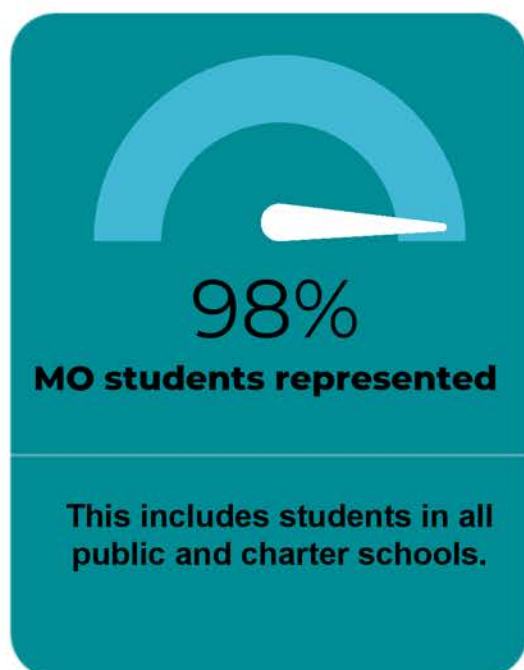
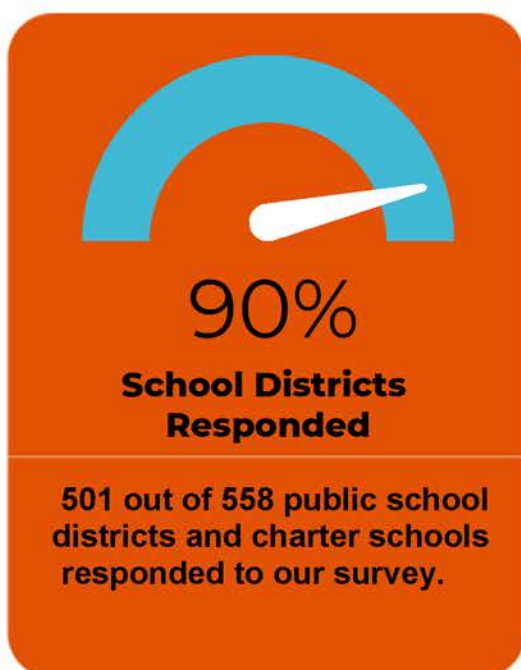
## Health Staff Positions



## Special Health Care Needs Survey

Ninety percent of the surveyed schools responded to the Special Health Care Needs Survey, and those schools provided data for 98% of Missouri students. The schools that did not respond were primarily very small school districts. Of the 2% of students that are not represented, less than 1% are from charter schools and just over 1% are from public schools.

The School Health Program strives for all Missouri students to be represented, however, 98% is an extraordinary representation.



# Special Health Care Needs Survey Results

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), through the School Health Online Reporting System (SHORS), collected data from 501 of 558 public/charter school districts. This represents 96 percent (%) of all enrolled students (893,012 students) for the 2024–2025 school year.

## Key Findings: Prevalence of Chronic Conditions



- **Life-Threatening Allergies:** 3.3% of students
  - Food allergies: 24,362 students
  - Insect allergies: 3,756 students
  - Latex allergies: 1,006 students
- **Asthma:** 7.6% of students (66,828) rely on medication at home or school.
- **Diabetes:** 0.33% of students (2,913) diagnosed
  - Type 1: 2,413
  - Type 2: 500
- **Mental Health Conditions:** 17.7% combined
  - ADD/ADHD: 78,776 (9%)
  - Anxiety: 30,944 (3.5%)
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder: 20,825 (2.3%)
  - Depression: 13,066 (1.5%)
  - Bipolar, PTSD, Tourette Syndrome, and others are also represented
- **Seizure Disorders:** 0.85% (7,527 students)
- **Other Notable Conditions:**
  - Gastrointestinal disorders: 7,963
  - Hydrocephalus with shunt: 707
  - Organ recipients: 188
  - Teen pregnancy/parenting: 573
  - Routine medications at school: 25,530 students

## Implications for Schools

- High prevalence: Nearly 1 in 5 students has a reported mental health condition. This underscores the importance of school nurses, counselors, and trained staff to provide daily support.
- Medical complexity: Students present with diverse conditions requiring specialized care, such as ventilator dependence, ostomy care, and seizure management.
- Life-saving readiness: With over 32,640 students requiring Individualized Health Plans (IHPs) or 504 Plans, schools must maintain strong health infrastructure, staff training, and emergency protocols.
- Equal access to care: Students with chronic conditions rely on schools to ensure access to medications, accommodations, and emergency response systems so they can thrive academically and socially.

## School Health Work in Action

The DHSS School Health Program is ensuring schools are ready by:

- Collecting, analyzing, and sharing statewide student health data to inform policy and funding decisions.
- Training and providing technical support for school nurses and staff to safely manage chronic conditions.
- Building systems of care by providing emergency preparedness resources and ensuring readiness for acute student health events.
- Partnering with state and community organizations to address rising mental health needs and chronic disease management.

**The percentages of students with life-threatening allergies, asthma, seizure disorders, diabetes and mental health conditions have remained consistent with the previous school year's survey results. This stability suggests that while the overall prevalence of these conditions is steady, schools must continue to maintain strong health service capacity to meet ongoing needs.**



# STUDENTS WITH DISEASE AND CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MISSOURI 2024-2025

Data collected from the School Health Online Reporting System (SHORS).

Percentage of Students in Missouri Public Schools with:



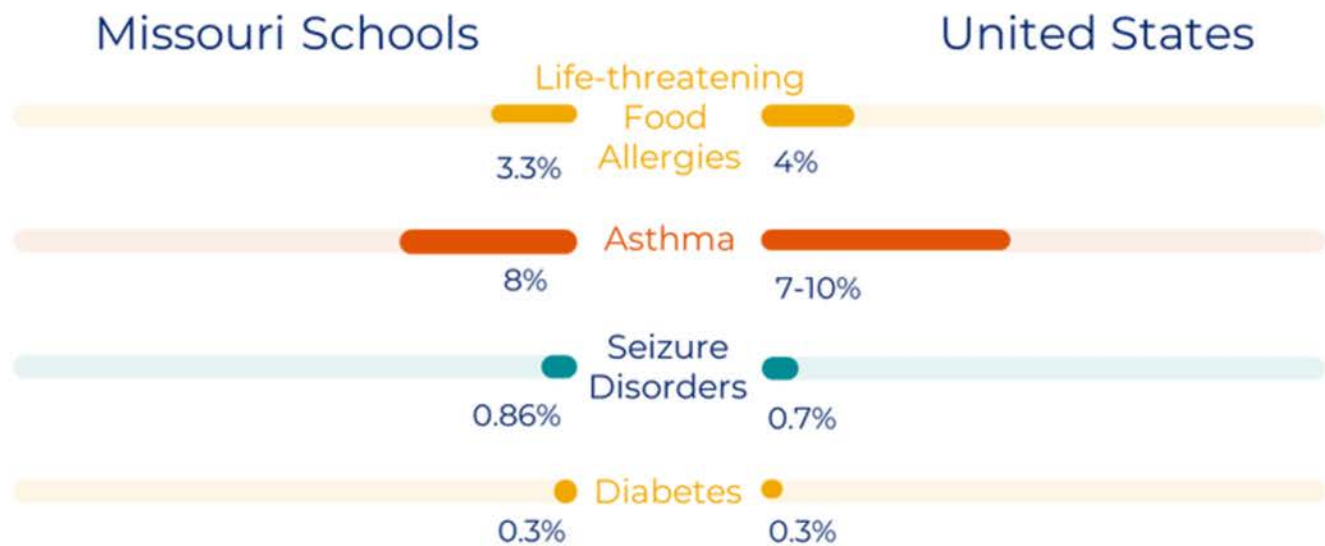
| Disease/Conditions                                                | Number | Disease/Conditions                                                          | Number |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Allergies - life threatening - Food                               | 24,362 | Sickle Cell Disease                                                         | 599    |
| Allergies - life threatening - Insect                             | 3,756  | Heart disease with activity restrictions                                    | 989    |
| Allergies - life threatening - Latex                              | 1,001  | Hemophilia/bleeding disorder                                                | 1,008  |
| Asthma - on meds at school                                        | 66,828 | Hydrocephalus with shunt                                                    | 707    |
| Blind/Visually Impaired                                           | 9,410  | Kidney disease                                                              | 1,431  |
| Cancer - History, not on medication                               | 796    | <b>Mental Health</b>                                                        |        |
| Taking Chemotherapeutic Medication                                | 196    | ADD/ADHD                                                                    | 78,776 |
| Chronic Infection (e.g. Hepatitis, etc)                           | 184    | Anxiety                                                                     | 30,944 |
| Cleft lip and palate                                              | 504    | Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)                                              | 20,825 |
| Cystic Fibrosis                                                   | 393    | Bipolar                                                                     | 1,660  |
| <b>Daily special health care procedures</b>                       |        | Depression                                                                  | 13,031 |
| Blood sugar check                                                 | 2,468  | Obsessive Compulsive Disorder                                               | 1,910  |
| Catheterization care                                              | 267    | Oppositional Defiant Disorder                                               | 5,405  |
| Ostomy care                                                       | 154    | Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome                                              | 3,262  |
| Tube feeding                                                      | 750    | Tourette Syndrome                                                           | 1,234  |
| Ventilator dependent                                              | 20     | Migraine Headaches                                                          | 13,198 |
| Suctioning                                                        | 128    | Neuromuscular disorder - non-progressive (Cerebral Palsy, etc.)             | 1,906  |
| Nebulizer Treatment                                               | 866    | Neuromuscular disorder - progressive (e.g. Muscular Dystrophy, etc)         | 421    |
| Deaf/Hearing Impaired with no assistive devices                   | 2,640  | Organ Recipient                                                             | 188    |
| Deaf with FM systems                                              | 626    | Orthopedic disability - permanent                                           | 2,272  |
| Deaf with hearing aids                                            | 1,956  | Orthopedic disability - temporary (e.g., Osgood Schlatter, fractures, etc.) | 3,809  |
| Deaf with cochlear implants                                       | 448    | Scoliosis requiring treatment                                               | 1,132  |
| Diabetes                                                          |        | Pregnancy                                                                   | 251    |
| Type 1                                                            | 2,413  | Teen Parenting                                                              | 382    |
| Type 2                                                            | 500    | Rheumatoid Arthritis                                                        | 382    |
| Eating disorder (Anorexia, Bulimia, etc)                          | 685    | Autoimmune disease (e.g., Lupus, etc)                                       | 1,432  |
| Gastrointestinal Disorders (e.g. Irritable Bowel Syndrome, etc)   | 7,963  | Routine medications at school                                               | 25,530 |
| Crohn's Disease                                                   | 460    | Seizure disorder                                                            | 7,527  |
| Ulcers                                                            | 235    | Students with DNAR order                                                    | 14     |
| Bowel/Bladder Incontinence                                        | 4,504  | Traumatic Brain Injury                                                      | 668    |
| Chromosomal Abnormalities (Down Syndrome, Neurofibromatosis, etc) | 2,979  | 504 Plans                                                                   | 32,640 |

**\*\*Totals do not reflect 57 districts that did not respond to the survey. 501 out of 558 public school districts reported data to DHSS. The enrollment in these districts was 879,179, representing 98% of all students enrolled in public schools (893,012) in the 2024-2025 school year. [371,691 of the 879,179 students included in the report indicate having health care insurance. 379,443 of the 879,179 included in the reporting districts indicated they did not inquire about health insurance status.]**

## Missouri vs CDC's National Numbers

Missouri's student health profile mirrors national patterns overall, with lower food allergy prevalence, consistent asthma and diabetes rates, and a modestly higher rate of seizure disorders. This information helps guide planning and ensures state resources are aligned with real student health needs.

How do Missouri chronic illness numbers compare to CDC's national numbers?



# Student Encounters and Outcomes Results

**Based on 384 districts reporting out of 558**

## **The Numbers at a Glance**

- 6,269,394 total visits to health offices statewide.
- 5,979,497 (95%) of visits sent students back to class, ready to learn.
- 286,147 visits resulted in students being sent home due to illness or injury or other.
- 2,730 encounters required emergency medical services or 911.

## **What This Means for Missouri Schools**

### **1 School Nurses Keep Students in Class**

With nearly 6 million classroom returns, nurses are reducing lost instructional time. For countless students, quick care in the health office means the difference between missing a full day of learning and being able to stay engaged.

### **2 Safety Net for Emergencies**

More than 2,700 cases required emergency response. Nurses act as the first line of triage, ensuring students get lifesaving help when seconds matter.

### **3 Reducing Burden on Families and Communities**

Without on-site school health services, many of these 6+ million encounters may have shifted to emergency rooms, urgent care, or healthcare provider offices, placing financial and logistical strain on families and the healthcare system.

### **4 A Public Health Touchpoint**

Every health office visit is also an opportunity to:

- Identify emerging health trends.
- Provide preventive care.
- Connect students and families to resources.

# Student Encounters and Outcomes

**2024-2025**

**SCHOOL YEAR**

\*Based on 384 districts reporting.

**6,269,394**

Total sum of visits to the health office



**5,979,497**

**95%**

Number of health office visits resulting in the student being returned to classroom for learning



**286,147**

Number of health office visits resulting in the student being sent home due to illness, injury or other



**2,730**

Number of health visits resulting in emergency medical services or 911



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## The Bigger Picture: What Does the Student Encounters and Outcomes Say About Missouri School Nurses?

- They are health care providers, safety officers, and educators rolled into one.
- Their work keeps students safe, learning, and thriving.
- They prevent unnecessary loss of classroom time while protecting students during medical emergencies.
- The scale of encounters proves that school health is not peripheral, it is central to student success and well-being.

### ✓ Bottom Line for School Administration:

Missouri school nurses manage millions of health encounters each year, balancing everyday care with urgent medical readiness. Their presence in schools directly supports academic achievement, public health, and emergency response capacity.



## *Looking to the Future and Beyond*

The School Health Program envisions a future where every Missouri student has equal access to safe, high-quality, and coordinated health services in their learning environment. Our work is grounded in the belief that healthy students learn more effectively, and healthy schools foster stronger communities.

School Health Program Priorities for the Future:

- Expanding Workforce Capacity – ensuring every school has access to licensed and supported school nurses.
- Data as a Driver – using SHORS and reporting systems to guide decisions and strengthen advocacy.
- Strengthening Preparedness and Safety – building readiness through training and emergency response planning.
- Championing Whole-Child Health – recognizing the vital link between health, wellness, and academic success.
- Deepening Collaboration – uniting schools, public health, and community partners to create lasting impact.

The future of the School Health Program is one of growth, innovation, and advocacy. By elevating the voice of school nurses, harnessing the power of data, and strengthening partnerships, Missouri is preparing not just for today's needs, but for the challenges and opportunities ahead.





## *Acknowledgements*

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the School Health Program, extends sincere appreciation to the following groups and individuals, whose contributions make this work possible:

- **Missouri School Nurses** – for their dedication to completing surveys, providing accurate data, and delivering compassionate care to students every day.
- **Administrators and Staff** – for supporting health services and ensuring school nurses have the tools they need to promote student well-being.
- **Local Public Health Agencies and Community Partners** – for their collaboration in advancing health initiatives and providing valuable resources.
- **Data and Reporting Teams** – for their expertise in collecting, analyzing, and sharing school health data through the School Health Online Reporting System (SHORS).
- **Leaders and Advocates** – for recognizing the importance of school health and ensuring data-driven decision-making at the state level.

Together, these contributions ensure Missouri students receive the health support they need to learn, grow, and thrive.



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