

## **Case Study**

### **Spectrum Health: Grand Rapids Public Schools—School Health Program**

For over 20 years, Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) has partnered with Spectrum Health to improve educational and health outcomes for their students through Spectrum's School Health Program. Started in GRPS in 1995, the School Health Program has since expanded to 13 other Michigan school districts (and soon to be 14 in 2017). Spectrum offers two models of service delivery, the GRPS model and the Consultative RN HUB model.

The GRPS program utilizes school health teams comprised of registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and health aides to provide direct services to students in 48 schools. GRPS' branch of the School Health Program currently employs 34 RNs, 11 LPNs, and 34 health aides and operates 4 full-service school-based health centers.

In the GRPS model, school teams operate under the supervision of a school nurse whose primary responsibility is oversight of health care delivery to students during the school day. The district has established policies and procedures to describe how care is to be delivered by the team under the supervision of the Registered Nurse. The nurse may delegate care to other school staff. The school nurse responsibilities include: identification of students who have health conditions; developing a plan for care during the school day; training and oversight of staff for safe delivery of medications and treatments; providing services that cannot be delegated; establishing medical response teams to respond to emergencies; telephone triage and support; surveillance and reporting of communicable diseases; connecting students to medical, dental, and mental health care through referrals; promoting health; health education; health screenings and follow up; and assisting students to obtain immunizations.

GRPS uses funds from the district budget, various grants, their local Intermediate school district, and the State Department of Education—including grants and 31A funds (for students deemed at high risk)—as well as funding from Spectrum Health to support their school nurses. The FTE for the nurses for each school is adjusted based on the health needs of the student population, and the availability of funds. While some funding for school nurses is still provided through Title I, GRPS has largely moved to alternative funding streams due to cumbersome reporting requirements.

While RNs serve as the cornerstones in the model, GRPS also braids together funding streams from both public and private entities to allow for reimbursement and service provision under a variety of health delivery models. Coordinating funds and services across the spectrum of health providers and sources enables GRPS to provide services outside of the traditional school nurse model—such as dental services. Beyond Spectrum Health, GRPS has also partnered with Cherry Health Services a local FQHC to deliver health services in their school-based health centers and through a traveling dental program. Because these services are provided through an FQHC, they are eligible for Medicaid reimbursement, regardless of a student's IEP status, and receive the FQHC enhanced reimbursement rate.

While data systems and privacy concerns have hindered data sharing and integration in the past, GRPS is actively moving towards linking education and health data under one system. The new data system is built upon the district's student record system, and as a result, has the potential to more easily link school health metrics—such as medications delivered, referrals given, etc.—to attendance and academic data. These system improvements are crucial steps to helping Spectrum Health and GRPS track and accomplish both its short-term goals to improve attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism and its long-term goals to improve graduation rates, workplace readiness and college entry.

In more rural districts, Spectrum Health has developed a consultative RN hub model for service delivery. Nurses are able to serve students utilizing telemedicine through its MedNow program,—reducing travel

time for school nurses and costs for the district. The Regional program will serve 13 districts in January 2017 with 14 RN and 2 LPN.

The partnership between Spectrum Health and the school districts have produced significant improvements in important school health indicators. Key accomplishments from FY 2015 included:

- 97% of students at participating schools met current immunization requirements to attend school;
- 98% of problems identified were resolved on-site by the school health care team;
- 195,092 visits occurred to the school health office; and
- 28,864 students were served across 7 school districts.

*For more information, please visit <http://www.spectrumhealth.org/healthier-communities/our-programs/school-health-program>*