



Consortium for Infant and Child Health

Asthma & Allergy School Nurse Expert Program

Overview

What is the Asthma & Allergy School Nurse Expert Program? CINCH has developed a program for local school systems to ensure that each school system has a resident asthma & allergy expert on staff. This person would be someone the school district and school nurses could turn to for answers, would provide training and mentoring to school nursing staff, school staff and parents, and be the resource for up to date information on asthma management. This creates a sustainable means of keeping school systems on the cutting edge of managing asthma. The ultimate goal is to prepare the A² Nurse Specialist to become a Certified Asthma Educator and A² Nurse Expert, but at the very least to be a “resident specialist” on asthma and allergies for the school system. Outcomes for the program include increasing the number of people with specific expertise and knowledge about asthma and allergies in our local schools and the number of Certified Asthma Educators within each school system.

What does the person need to do? Participating school systems will nominate *up to three* school nurses to participate in the program. Your A² Nurse Specialist/Expert will be your school systems’ resident expert on asthma and allergies. The A² Nurses will participate in educational opportunities with a goal of becoming an “asthma & allergy expert” and eventually obtaining associated asthma educator certification.

How do they become an expert? Each nurse will start out as an A² Nurse Specialist, unless they already have an asthma educator certification. CINCH and the American Lung Association will provide a variety of training and exposure opportunities to enhance the asthma and allergy knowledge and skills of the A² Nurse Specialist, with a long term goal of promotion to A² Nurse Expert designation, when Certified Asthma Educator status is obtained. A² Nurses will have opportunities to engage in specific training on school asthma and asthma management.

What does the program provide? The program will provide supportive and comprehensive education and mentorship for the nurses involved. The A² Nurses will participate in the following training opportunities provided through CINCH and our partners.

1. Asthma 101 Program – each A² Nurse will receive training to become a *certified Asthma 101 Facilitator* through the American Lung Association.
2. Environmental Protection Agency Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools (TFS) Kit – each A² Nurse will receive training on the tools to better identify opportunities for use in their school systems.
3. Open Airways for Schools (OAS) - The American Lung Association’s *OAS* is an asthma management program for schoolchildren aged 8-11 who have been diagnosed with asthma. Each A² Nurse will receive training via webinar on the ALA’s Open Airways and receive a consultation from ALA on which components may be of best use to implement in their school system. They will also receive a kit of materials and tools.
4. Monthly 30-60 minute conference call/webinar (after school hours) with the A² Program Medical Expert Support Team at Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters



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(asthma/allergy experts). This call will provide one to two monthly training sessions as well as an open questions and answers forum. Special cases can be presented by the nurses to be discussed by the group and A² Medical Expert Support Team.

5. Opportunities for special one-on-one consultation for particularly difficult cases and situations.
6. Opportunities to participate in national and state level training, such as the Asthma Educator Institute, in preparation for the Certified Asthma Educator exam. CINCH aims to bring these opportunities to Hampton Roads, when possible.
7. Opportunities to participate in the A² Nurse listserv and message board to collaborate and communicate with other A² Nurses.

What is expected of the nurse and school system in return? CINCH expects that this training will greatly benefit both the A² Nurses and their associated school system in optimally managing children with asthma in schools.

In return, we expect the A² Nurses to:

1. Participate in trainings, mostly via webinar. Initially webinars will be once per week after school for one hour to train the A² Nurses on Asthma 101, OAS, and TFS. Then, webinars will be once or twice per month for 30-60 minutes, depending on the topic and needs as requested by A² Nurses. Timing of training opportunities will be planned to minimize disruption to the normal availability of the nurse during school hours. Most activities will be planned on work days or afterschool. However, there may be a *very* limited number of training opportunities during the school day.
2. Provide one mandatory in-service on asthma & allergies to entire school system nurse staff once per year (content and length of training based on your staff's needs as identified by A² Nurses).
3. Provide one mandatory Asthma 101 training (typically 30 minutes) for physical education/coaching staff initially, then new staff one per year thereafter.
4. Develop and implement a new nurse mentorship program related to asthma and allergies for new nursing staff. The program scope and requirements are up to the A² Nurses and their school system – guidance will be given on potential activities that could be considered (i.e., special training for new nurses, once a week phone call, mentorship visits, etc).
5. Identify and implement in at least 3 schools OAS, Asthma 101, and/or TFS. Provide training and support to the nurse at those schools, as needed.
6. Promote the use of the Virginia Asthma Action Plan by your school system.
7. Encourage PTA participation in the *CINCH Pinch of Prevention for PTA Program* Asthma Action Plan Module and implement in at least 5 schools (This program is an easy lay approach to why children need asthma action plans in schools. PTA leader should be able to easily implement the program which consists of a one time 5-10



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minute pre-scripted presentation delivered during a PTA meeting and a drop in article for the school newsletter. The local school nurse may also present the program, although the program is designed for PTA leaders).

We expect the school system to support the A² Nurses in the activities outlined above each year by:

1. Allowing participation in and attendance to associated educational opportunities.
2. Allowing and making mandatory trainings to school staff as outlined above.
3. Providing feedback and permission for new nurse mentorship program.
4. Encouraging participation in asthma and allergy program activities by schools, such as using in part or in whole as appropriate, *Open Airways*, *Tools for Schools*, *Asthma 101* and *CINCH Pinch of Prevention Asthma Action Plan Module* and other asthma friendly school activities and policies.