

August 23, 2021

To: Members of the MN Frontline Worker Pay Working Group
From: The School Nurse Organization of MN (SNOM)
Re: Recommendations on financial support to frontline workers

On behalf of the School Nurse Organization (SNOM), we are writing this letter to support the inclusion of the Licensed School Nurses in frontline worker compensation being considered by the Frontline Worker Pay Working Group.

SNOM is an organization of Licensed School Nurses (LSNs) working in our school districts across the state. We believe we qualify for the frontline worker compensation due to the increased risk of virus exposure due to the nature of our work and the increased workload that has created a financial burden for our nurses. As a result of the virus and Delta variant, our LSNs are again at the forefront of exposure as the school year begins.

Licensed school nurses across the state have direct contact with students and staff who have COVID, or are suspected of having COVID, along with many other illnesses. There are over 135,000 teachers/staff and over 800,000 children in the E-12 public school system.

LSNs have no choice but to work physically at their school or service center directly with infected students and staff, with no ability to work from home. Our nurses have increased risk of virus exposure due to the nature of our work.

In addition, the amount of time we are spending at our job has increased drastically without any additional compensation. We are salaried and not paid hourly. Most nurses were required to do contract tracing which often results in continuing our work during the evenings and on weekends. This increased workload at the school due to COVID, contract tracing, and our increased exposure, has required some nurses to hire additional day care because of the time needed to do our job, but also because of care needed because of quarantine timelines and requirements. This is a huge financial burden to our families.

The increased burden of COVID on our practice and workload does not diminish the needs for which students regularly see the school nurse, which include asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, GI tube management, seizures, mental health issues, common flu, allergies, headaches, and many, many more. The school nurses have been burdened beyond comprehension.

Our school nurses will continue their frontline work to help all students to continue to have access to education and health care. But it is not without worry or a burden to our workload, family health and financial well-being. And now our job has begun to include counseling school nurses to stay in the profession.

We appreciate the opportunity to voice our support of the school nurses and sincerely request that we be included in frontline worker compensation.

Sincerely,

Jolie Holland
Legislative Chair, School Nurse Organization of Minnesota