

Children's Health

Survey: Parents Favor Health Services In School

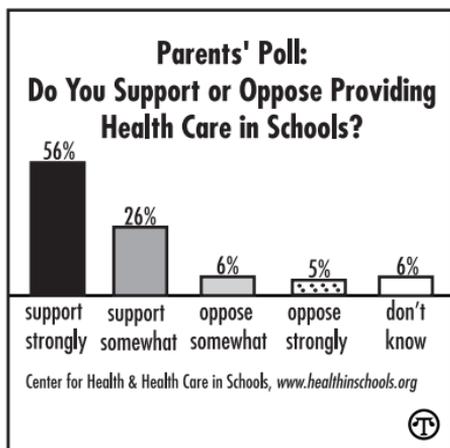
(NAPSA)—According to a national survey, more than eight in 10 parents support the provision of health care services in school. In addition, most parents believe that schools are an important source for health care for uninsured children, and that schools can provide a broad range of health care services.

What many of these parents may find surprising, however, is that less than half of the country's public schools employ a full-time nurse. In fact, some schools have few or no health services.

"Many parents are under the false impression that a school nurse is on the premises all the time or that their child has access to health care services at school," said Julia Lear, Ph.D., director of the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (CHHS). "But that isn't the case. In fact, many of the nation's 90,000 public schools do not have a full-time nurse on staff. And even those schools that do have a nurse on staff—either full-time or part-time—do not always have the capability of dispensing medications or providing treatment to children with injuries or serious health conditions."

The survey results demonstrate that parents feel a need for more than the basic level of care. In fact, parents support a wide range of services, including:

- 96 percent of parents say it is important for schools to provide care in the case of medical emergencies;
- 90 percent say it is important to provide care to children with



Surprisingly, many children do not have access to full-time health care in school.

chronic illnesses like asthma and diabetes; and

- 85 percent say it is important for schools to be able to administer medications.

These opinions are shared by parents regardless of race, political affiliation or household income. The potential benefits of in-school health care extend to the provision of information about nutrition, exercise, drugs and alcohol, mental health and sex.

"Many parents look to their schools—or would like to look to their schools—to not only educate their children, but also to help keep them healthy and safe and ready to learn," said Lear. "It is especially important in these difficult times when children are experiencing stress on a routine basis."

For more information, or to download a parent toolkit, go to the Parent Resource Center at www.healthinschools.org.