

Dear School Partner,

The COVID-19 pandemic has afforded us the opportunity to examine our practices and policies as we work to keep students and staff safe by minimizing the risk of infection. We have reviewed published research, worked with our own physicians and pharmacists and consulted with other health systems to ensure that our nursing staff operate in a manner that is consistent with best practice standards.

One area that has been identified as an opportunity for improvement is the use of nebulized medications. The use of a nebulizer results in respiratory particles from the patient being airborne for approximately 2 ½ hours following the treatment. This increases the risk of spreading any type of disease that is transmitted by respiratory droplets. Due to the limited availability of data regarding aerosols generated by nebulizer treatments as being infectious there is risk to other individuals for continuing their use as routine practice.

Based on published recommendations from the Indiana State Department of Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses, we strongly recommend discontinuing the use of nebulizer treatments in the school nurse clinics during the 2020-21 academic year. If a student needs a respiratory treatment, the most commonly used medication can be safely and effectively administered using a metered-dose inhaler (MDI) with a spacer. A spacer is a device that is used with an inhaler to improve its ease of use and effectiveness. Research has shown that when used correctly an MDI and spacer is as effective as a nebulizer treatment.

Our nurses are trained in the proper use of an MDI and will provide assistance to any student not used to using an inhaler.

Parents should be notified to ask their provider for an order for an inhaler and spacer which should be taken to school for use during the school year. We are also sending a draft letter for your use if you care to use it.

Please support this change in practice to help us keep students safe. At this time, we will be changing our emergency albuterol procedure to include the use of an inhaler with spacer instead of giving a nebulizer treatment. Please feel free to contact me to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

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