

School districts requesting RNs to obtain Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) credentials for Medical/Health Evaluation (Medical Review) for students being evaluated for special education

Beginning July 1, 2016

- **Components of 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160**

Medical Review (health evaluation) of students being considered for special education is described as a five-component process in 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160(a)(1-5) - Medical Review. The purpose is to determine if any known or unknown medical or health issues may be present and impacting a student's ability to achieve academically. The individual components of the evaluation must be performed by qualified personnel.

Section 226.160(a)(5) includes determining the medical, school health, and/or school nurse services that should be provided during the school day and developing a proposed plan that provides for specific accommodations, modifications, or interventions to be implemented when educationally relevant medical findings are the result of the review, which shall include annual goals, short-term objectives, and ongoing evaluation.

Beginning July 1, 2016, personnel who are qualified to perform sections of the 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160, include the following:

- **226.160(a)(1-4)**
 - ✓ Licensed physicians, such as a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO);
 - ✓ Registered Nurse (RN) who hold at least a bachelor's degree in nursing, education, or a related field; or
 - ✓ Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APN).

(See 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160(b)(2)(B)(C)(D) for qualifications)

- **226.160(a)(1-5)**
 - ✓ RN who holds an ISBE issued Professional Educator License (PEL) endorsed as school nurse, (See 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160(b)(2)(A)); or
 - ✓ RN, who by June 30, 2016, obtained the designation for Individualized Education Program (IEP) privileges by a non-PEL Registered Nurse (See 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160(c)(1)(A) or (B)).

Beginning July 1, 2016, any Medical Review submitted as part of the IEP process for evaluation or reevaluation or for creating or modifying nursing activities or student health related goals as part of the IEP, must carry the signature of a RN who holds an ISBE issued PEL or a RN who obtained the designation for Individualized Education Program (IEP) privileges as noted above. No other

credentials may be substituted in order to meet the requirements of personnel qualified to conduct the Medical Review (Health Evaluation).

Affirmation of those credentials is available on the “public search” function of the Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) on the ISBE website or the administrator search, if permitted. For more information on the requirements of Medical Review, and what a review should include, see 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160 at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/226ark.pdf>.

**Note - The position of non-PEL RN with IEP privileges is not eligible for Special Education Personnel Reimbursement as School Nurse but may be reimbursable under the assignment of NHA “Non Certified Health Aide”. All positions claimed under NHA must hold an IDFPR license as either RN or LPN.*

- **Districts Without Access to a PEL School Nurse (Certified/Endorsed) or RN with IEP Designation**

Beginning July 1, 2016, a school district or special education cooperative that does not have a person qualified to perform all five components of a Medical Review by June 30 and needs one, must be “actively engaged” in an effort to recruit and hire a Registered Nurse who holds the PEL endorsement in school nursing. Active engagement can be demonstrated by a position posting that is publicized in a way that would demonstrate effort to recruit a qualified candidate. The posting for a position that requires PEL must meet the requirements of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/21B-25), which stipulates that the “holder of such an endorsement is entitled to all of the rights and privileges granted holders of any other Professional Educator License, including teacher benefits, compensation, and working conditions”.

A district or cooperative that has actively recruited after July 1, 2016, but has not been successful in hiring a PEL-holding school nurse, may hire a Registered Nurse, Advanced Practice Nursing, or physician (personnel qualified to conduct components 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.160 (a)(1-4) of a Medical Review) and may submit documents for referring that individual to begin the process for obtaining a designation for Medical Review.

Required documentation for ISBE review and approval:

The following six documents must be sent **via email only**, to Jgerdes@isbe.net. No mailed or faxed documents will be accepted.

1. The position posting as advertised, with dates and venues of personnel notices (i.e. district website, newspaper advertisement in print or online, postings on websites of nurse or education-affiliated organizations);
2. The results of such recruitment (i.e., how many, if any, PEL nurse applicants, rationale for not being successful in hiring any of the PEL qualified applicants, if any);
3. Letter from the public school district or special education cooperative administrator, or if a RN is employed for such school nursing services through a contractual arrangement with another public entity, a letter from both the district/special education cooperative and the contractual agency. The letter should indicate that the RN’s duties will include providing

- educational evaluation and instructional judgment for students being evaluated or reevaluated for special education services;
4. Cover letter from the RN with name, contact information (email and phone), bachelor's degree and major (nursing, education, or field related to health or education) and statement that the RN does not, nor has previously held an ISBE Professional Educator License endorsement in school nursing;
 5. Copy of current RN licensure; and
 6. Proof of current employment or notice of hire (contract, board minutes) by the district or special education cooperative or agency contracted.

Required prior to obtaining IEP designation by non-PEL holding Registered Nurse

1. Successful completion of the online course (RN's in Schools – Expanding Your Special Education Role) offered by ISBE within 12 months from date of hire;
or
2. Passing the School Nurse Content Test #182 offered by Illinois Licensure Testing System (<http://www.il.nesinc.com/>) within 12 months of hire.

PLEASE NOTE: Obtaining the designation for IEP Medical Review confers neither certification nor Professional Educator License endorsement for school nursing or any rights and privileges of certified staff. RNs who successfully complete this course or test will be able to continue to provide such evaluation and services in special education through the course of their employment in any Illinois public school as long as RN licensure and professional development requirements are met.

Questions may be directed to Jessica Gerdes, 312-814-5560, or jgerdes@isbe.net.