



Extending **EMR** Access to **School Nurses** Study: A School Health Partnership (**EMRSN Study**)

"The EMRSN study revolutionizes community health partnerships by integrating the school nurses into the asthma care team. With this study we will revolutionize communication, care coordination and data sharing through health information exchange." –Sujani Kakumanu, MD



University of Wisconsin Partners with School Nurses to Improve Asthma Care

Asthma poses a significant health problem for children in the United States. Children in the inner cities suffer an increased burden of asthma, particularly in communities with high pollution and high rates of poverty. Studies have shown that children with asthma have worse health outcomes, increased school absences, and poor academic performance

compared to children without asthma.¹ School nurses can play a significant role in improving the delivery of care and management for school children with asthma considering school is where most children spend the majority of their time. By improving the communication among school nurses, families, and health care providers, optimal care coordination for children with asthma can be

achieved. The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (UW SMPH), an academic partner of UW Health, aims to transform asthma care for school-children with two ongoing initiatives. The first initiative is a national effort to develop a coordinated school-based Asthma Management Program (SAMPRO). Details about SAMPRO, a joint initiative between the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), will be published in a whitepaper in September 2016 in The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. The

Pediatric Asthma and School Health

- **Nationally:**
 - Asthma affects 6.8 million children (9.3% overall)
 - Children with asthma miss **three times** as much school as healthy children
- **In Wisconsin:**
 - 11% of children have been diagnosed with asthma
 - **56%** of children with asthma report missing school days due to asthma
- **In Wisconsin Primary Care:**
 - Approximately 7-9% of medically-homed patients have asthma

¹ Liptzin DR, Gleason MC, Cicutto LC, et al. Developing, Implementing, and Evaluating a School-Centered Asthma Program: Step-up Asthma Program. J Allergy Clin Immunol Pract. Jun 7 2016.



second initiative, the Extending EMR Access to School Nurses (EMRSN) study, focuses on providing school nurses in Wisconsin's Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) with access to health information exchange (HIE) to enhance the treatment of children (ages 12 and under in elementary schools) who live with asthma.

EMRSN Pilot:

- Children (ages 4-12) with asthma
- Launched: April 2016
 - Trained 3 school nurses
 - 2 participating provider clinics
- Expansion: August 2016
 - 32 elementary schools
 - 29 school nurses
 - 9 participating provider clinics

Launched in April 2016, the EMRSN study provides electronic medical records (EMR) access to elementary school nurses using EpicCare Link®, a web-based application for connecting organizations to their community affiliates. EpicCare Link® allows school nurses to view the patient's medical history, Asthma Action Plans (AAP), and the authorization forms of students enrolled in the project. School nurses are also able to send direct secure messages (DSM) to primary care providers and pediatricians, creating a bidirectional flow of information and improving coordination between these providers. Since school nurses treat students on a daily basis, they have a wealth of information not typically available to primary care providers. Expanding EMR access to school nurses facilitates a more comprehensive picture of the patient's health with a goal of improving care coordination.

Extending EMR Access Beyond Traditional Medical Environments

One of the biggest challenges in launching the EMRSN study was extending EMR access outside the traditional health system to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-compliant but non-HIPAA-protected facilities. To overcome this challenge, the EMRSN study collaborated with the UW Health/UW Hospitals and Clinics' legal teams to establish care site and user agreements between the school district, participating provider clinics, and each school. All user agreements are signed by the



school nurse and principal to address the transfer of Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act- (FERPA) and HIPAA-protected information.

To further address privacy concerns, a series of trainings were provided to school nurses including:

- HIPPA and data encryption trainings so that all users engaged in the project are HIPAA compliant and able to exercise HIPPA related communications
- On-site trainings for the school district, leadership, principals, and school nurses that included two small group seminars: FERPA/HIPPA and CareLink functionality
- One-on-one coaching provided to the school nurses by liaison nurses in the care setting at each school site
- Onboarding and termination protocols and audits

Looking to the Future

Students will be eligible to participate in the study in the 2016-2017 school year starting in August 2016. The study's expansion in August 2016 will be comprised of nine sites with up to five pediatricians each and 32 participating schools. In the long term, the program aims to capture and collect data that sheds light on whether EMR access provided by this project increases school attendance, improves academic achievement, and increases adherence to treatment plans. Additionally, the program aims to make asthma action plans available through patient portals to increase engagement of patients and families in managing students' care.

About UW School of Medicine and Public Health:

UW School of Medicine and Public Health is the nation's only combined school of medicine and public health. Its 1,500 faculty in 10 basic science and 17 clinical departments engage in research, education and clinical care at UW Health's clinic locations, University Hospital, American Family Children's Hospital, UW Health at the American Center, UW Health Rehabilitation Hospital, other Madison hospitals and approximately 90 regional locations.

Website: <http://www.med.wisc.edu/>