

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2009

Dear Colleague:

Nurses in our nation's public school system are critical to keeping kids healthy and ready to learn. We ask you to help improve children's access to these health care services in our schools by becoming a cosponsor of the *Student-to-School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act* (S. 2750).

For millions of American children, contact with their school nurses may be their only consistent access to a health care professional, particularly in terms of preventive care. The adequate presence of school nurses helps children stay as healthy as possible, and therefore contributes greatly towards eliminating barriers to success in the school environment. However, more than half of our nation's public schools are lacking a full-time registered nurse, and there are many disparities at the local, regional, and state levels in accessing their services.

The importance of school nurses has been brought into sharp relief by the recent heightened need stemming from the H1N1 influenza outbreak. As you know, school-age children fall into a demographic at greater risk for H1N1 infection. As on-site care providers, school nurses play a critical role in developing and implementing strategies for prevention, education, and treatment of the H1N1 flu. In addition, they have been a vital part of the nationwide effort to dispense vaccines to children. School nurses have been instrumental in mitigating the impact of H1N1 flu throughout the country, and they are constrained only by the limited availability of resources to support them in this effort.

For all these reasons, we need to make a greater investment in our school nurses and in our children. By providing grants through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the *Student-to-School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act* would allow states to reduce their student-to-nurse ratio. With increased support, these dedicated health care professionals will be able to make an even greater contribution to promoting children's access to quality health care services.

To cosponsor the *Student-to-School Nurse Ratio Improvement Act*, please have a member of your staff contact Ariel Simon with Senator Schumer at 4-6542 or Shari Swaaley with Senator Gillibrand at 4-4451.

Sincerely,



Charles Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator