



Question: What is a Individualized Health Plan (IHP) and should it be included in a student's IEP?

Answer: According to NASN, an IHP is “a written document that outlines the provision of student healthcare services intended to achieve specific student outcomes.” These documents are created for students whose academic performance or school attendance is, or may be, affected by their healthcare needs.

Nursing and health are services that may be included as part of both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under IDEA's related services, “school nurse services” are provided by a qualified school nurse while “school health services” may be provided by either a qualified school nurse or other qualified persons, such as a trained paraprofessional. These are different from medical services, which are related services “provided by a licensed physician to determine a child's medically related disability that results in the child's need for special education and related services.”

While nurses write care plans in every institution they work in, an IHP is specific to the school environment. It gives the school all the important and necessary information about your child, identifies and documents your child's health needs (and how to manage them at school), creates health-related goals, documents interventions and solutions to potential health problems that may occur while your child is at school, and develops a thorough plan to train staff, address medical emergencies, and provide a safe environment in which your child can thrive.

An IHP is also intended to help communicate a child's specific health care needs to the people who support them at school: administrators, regular and special education teachers, therapy providers, health assistants, substitute teachers, and parents. An IHP is a great way to make sure the school staff is informed about a child's health concerns





and that plans are in place to address the unique health needs of each child. This could include how medication will be administered, what and when a child should self-report, how their health will be monitored, and who the go-to person will be.

Writing an IHP is the nurse's responsibility, but the process ideally includes utilizing information from the student, their family, and primary physician, and it may include information from teachers and other educational and development specialists. And because health needs can change from year to year (sometimes day to day!), the IHP is meant to be dynamic, to serve as the basis for ongoing communication and collaboration between the parent, the child, the child's primary provider, the school, the school nurse, and the IEP or 504 team.

In Nebraska an IHP can be attached to the IEP or 504 plan, or it can be a separate document referenced by the IEP/504 team. However, because an IHP contains school-related nursing and health services, it is included in the IEP in the related services section under supplementary aids and services. In a 504 plan, the IHP would be referenced as part of the student's health accommodations.

