



Individual Healthcare Plans (IHP) will be developed for all students with complex needs and/or require daily nursing care. The IHP is a care plan that is a means of communicating care among school staff, serves as a teaching vehicle, and articulates the care and the outcomes expected. Although IHPs are frequently associated with special education students, any child with a relatively complex health condition or a need for modifications in the school environment due to a health condition could have an IHP.

The nurse in conjunction with the parent, physician and school building administrator develop the IHP. If the student is in special education, the plans are initiated in cooperation with the diagnostician. The plans are treated as confidential and are stored in an area, which is easily accessible to personnel who are identified in the plans.

School nurses can experience many benefits from using IHPs for students with complex nursing needs. First, by documenting the student's needs and care the need for additional staffing is established. Second, the quality of school nursing services is ensured. The ANA Standards of School Nursing Practice requires a school nurse to have an IHP for a student when significant health needs exist. The nurse whose practice includes written IHPs based on the most current standards and information on nursing care is more likely to deliver a higher standard of nursing care as well as find ways to prioritize school nursing services. Third, the IHP can help to ensure continuity of care as students move from school to school. Finally, the IHPs can help to create a safer process for delegation of nursing care in the school setting. The IHP encourages full communication and cooperation to provide the best possible quality of care for the student.