

Friday Beat

December 1, 2023, Edition

The newsletter that takes a [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child](#) approach. The *Friday Beat* is a free publication of the Texas Department of State Health Services. It is edited and compiled by the [School Health Program](#).

Announcements

National Influenza Vaccination Week

National Influenza Vaccination Week is December 4-8, 2023. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) released a Digital Toolkit to highlight the importance of influenza vaccination. [View the CDC toolkit](#) and download resources. For more information on the flu and where to get a vaccine in Texas, visit the [DSHS Influenza \(Flu\) webpage](#).

School Reports: Epinephrine Auto-Injectors and Asthma Medication

Texas schools must report the administration of unassigned asthma medication and unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors to the Texas DSHS. The School Health Program and the DSHS Chronic Disease Epidemiology Branch have created reports for the 2022-2023 school year with data submitted via the reporting forms. [View the 2022-2023 school year data](#) for administered epinephrine and unassigned asthma medication.

Unassigned Opioid Antagonist Policies

[Texas Education Code 38.222](#) requires school districts serving students in grades 6 through 12 to adopt a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists. An open-enrollment charter school or private school may choose to adopt a policy. In accordance with [25 Texas Administrative Code, Section 40.87](#), campus must report when a school personnel member or school volunteer administers an opioid antagonist. Use the DSHS [unassigned opioid antagonist medication reporting form](#) to report when opioid antagonist medication is administered.

Professional Development

Using Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to Enhance Student Mental Health

[Society of Health and Physical Educators \(SHAPE\) America](#) hosted a [webinar](#) on October 12, 2023 on ways to use SEL competencies to enhance student mental health in health education classes. The training outlines how to use SEL competencies and sub-competencies to address mental health, how to evaluate for both SEL competencies and National Health Education Standards performance indicators, and plan for instruction based on assessment. Share this [free recording](#) with educators and school staff.

Funding Opportunities

Reaching for Excellence Grant

DSHS invites public and charter schools to apply for the [Reaching for Excellence \(RFE\) in Texas School Health Grant](#). Two \$10,000 grants will be awarded for the 2024-2025 school year. The goal of the RFE grant is to fund projects that inspire students to live healthier lives. Projects must focus on at least one key component of the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model](#). Register for the [December 5th](#) webinar to learn more about the grant and application process. Applications will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. CT on January 22, 2024. Email schoolhealthawards@dshs.texas.gov or call 512-776-7279 for questions.

Health Education

Smokefree Teen Resources

The [National Cancer Institute's Tobacco Control Research Branch](#) developed [Smokefree Teen](#) as part of the [Smokefree.gov Initiative](#) to reduce the number of youth who use tobacco. Free resources include a text messaging program, the quitSTART app, personalized quit plans, and other strategies for tackling cravings, bad moods, and other situations where teens may smoke.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

Family Exercise Ideas for Every Season

[Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) published [ways for families to engage in physical activity together in every season](#). The Academy encourages families to aim for a goal of 30 minutes for adults and 60 minutes for kids of moderate activity daily, regardless of the weather and use creative ways to reach that goal.

Nutrition Environment and Services

Nibbles for Health Newsletters

[U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service](#) created the [Nibbles for Health Newsletters](#) for parents of young children. The newsletter can be shared by Child and Adult Care Food Program providers to communicate information about popular nutrition topics. There are 15 newsletters available in both English and Spanish.

Peer Empathy Support through Be a Pal Program

[Food Allergy Research and Education](#) has updated the [Be a Pal® program](#) to better support empathy towards others related to the social and emotional impact of living with a food allergy. Downloads include materials for implementation in school and classroom settings such as posters, flyers, bookmarks, certificates, a food allergy awareness presentation, and an interactive course for middle and high school students.

Health Services

Fighting Fentanyl

[Health and Human Services Commission](#) has created a [toolkit for fighting fentanyl](#). Learn about fentanyl, naloxone, and signs of an overdose. The toolkit includes information for schools, parents, and youth. View the toolkit resources for schools and programs serving youth.

Child Asthma Risk Assessment Tool

[Asthma Community Network](#) developed the [Child Asthma Risk Assessment Tool](#) (CARAT) to support the NIH-funded [National Cooperative Inner-City Asthma Study](#), and has been used for over 20 years by researchers, healthcare providers, and patients. CARAT is a free app for generating a personalized asthma risk profile for children with asthma. Information provided by patients and healthcare providers identifies unique asthma risk factors for individuals.

How to Create Epinephrine and Stock Inhaler Policies

The [American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology](#) created toolkits to assist schools to develop and implement high-quality [stock epinephrine](#) and [stock inhaler](#) policies. Both toolkits share information and resources about why stock medications are important for campuses, the laws specific to each state and how to develop a compliant school program, and ways to find the right devices and evidence-based training material for staff.

Family Engagement

Holiday Season Social Media Toolkit

[Department of Family Protective Services](#) created a [social media toolkit for the holiday season](#). This toolkit includes messages about remaining healthy while traveling, activities for families, stress, and safety. Share these messages with families before upcoming holiday breaks. These messages and links can be used as is, or they can be customized in any way that works best for your community by directing people to your prevention program's information.

Quote to Note

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." –Eleanor Roosevelt

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