

# Insightful Alumni –

## The Changing Role of the Nurse

We asked a few School of Nursing alumni to write about how they have seen the role of a nurse change in the past and continue to change in the future. The following are their very personal and insightful answers:

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The School Nurse of the "Twenty Teens" will need to be increasingly involved in decision making at all levels. In order to advocate for the clients and the profession, the school nurse will need to be increasingly politically active so that environment, health curriculum, nutrition, and nursing decisions for the schools remain focused on the maintenance and improvement of the health of each student while supporting the school's main goal of educating.

We will be caring for even more children with serious health concerns and chronic conditions involving increasingly sophisticated equipment and treatments as well as the basic and traditional techniques. We must devote additional time to health education programs and helping students and families become self-advocates.

School nurses will be using more technology to document and communicate while we also cope with more time consuming regulations and liability. The nurses will be



doing more data gathering and analysis and research of student health and effective use of our staffing. We also will be more involved in studies conducted through medical institutions but gathering data in the schools.

As the economy improves, the likelihood of mandated school nurses in

Oregon could improve but only if organized school nurses continue to collaborate with other school personnel and legislators to push for it. However, because of the national nursing shortage, fewer school nurses may well be working as supervisors of assistants.

It will continue to be an exciting and challenging job for a nurse who would like to be a member of a multi-team education community having the joy of making the difference today and into the future. This sounds very reminiscent of the goals outlined when school nursing started 101 years ago. It is still true that healthy children learn better. Although time, money, and disease are constant concerns, people's bodies, needs, and desires remain much the same, and when nurses work together our visions become improvements.