



Over the past decade, **Moses Taylor Foundation** has continued the legacy of the Moses Taylor Hospital by championing the health needs of people in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA).

In 2018, the Foundation moved to empower all school nurses in NEPA to meet the health needs of their students by introducing the **Support for School Nurses Initiative (SNI)**. While school nurses serve a critical role on the front lines of children's health, they are historically understaffed, under-supplied, and under-supported. 2023 marked five years since the official launch of the Initiative in 2018 and three years into its strategy implementation. At that time, the Foundation was eager to take a step back and learn from the work thus far, tell the story of its evolution, and assess the intended (and unintended) outcomes of the work.

In January 2023, **Intention 2 Impact (I2I)**, a social impact measurement consulting firm,

was commissioned to create a monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) framework and conduct a retrospective evaluation of the SNI. The following summary presents high-level findings from this 18-month process and next steps proposed by the Foundation.

Findings are organized by the 5 strategy pillars of the SNI:

1 **Advocacy**

2 **Connections & Awareness**

3 **Professional Development**

4 **Staffing & Funding**

5 **COVID-Related Needs**

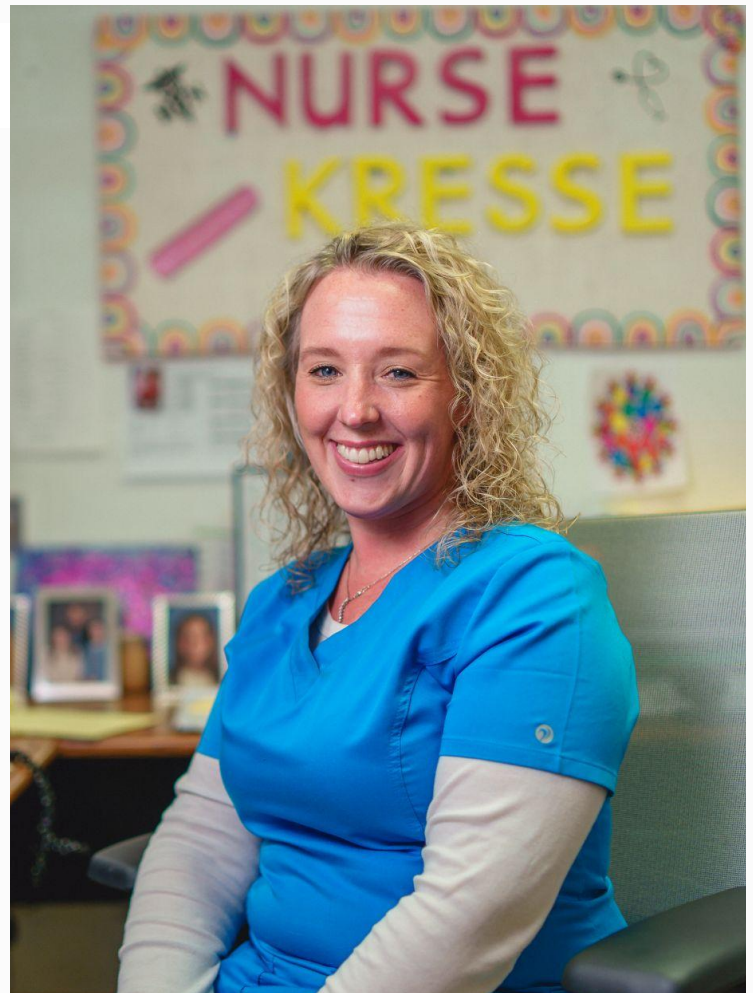
1 Advocacy

The Foundation spent the past several years building capacity to engage in advocacy efforts for the first time. This included staff and board training, convening partner funders, and extensive outreach to colleagues and others to identify options and best practices. The Foundation is making progress to identify options for a partner to lead this work with the Foundation's support.

KEY LEARNINGS: Evaluation participants provided several recommendations to further the Foundation's advocacy work:

- **Build a coalition** of knowledgeable, committed actors to catalyze support, mobilize resources, and advocate for change
- Seek out and **leverage opportunities to enact meaningful policy changes**, including:
 - Advocate for policies that address the school nurse-to-student ratio, the funding formula for nurse salaries and ratios, and the allocation of health-related funds to support school nursing
 - Leverage the PA Supreme Court ruling on the unconstitutionality of the school funding formula

NEXT STEPS: The Foundation is currently pursuing partnership opportunities for engaging an advocacy consultant to create a school nurse support strategy at the statewide level.



2 Connections & Awareness

Since 2021, the Foundation focused part of its efforts on fostering relationships and connections between school nurses and ecosystem actors (e.g., health care providers, parents, school administration, etc). This included an awareness campaign featuring emails, advertisements, informational videos, and media outreach. Additionally, the Foundation supported a series of roundtable discussions between school nurses and other health care providers; as well as other efforts to build connections, such as through flyer templates for school nurses to easily communicate with parents and educators.

KEY LEARNINGS: While some nurses reported improved connections with local health care providers and feeling more appreciated by their school/district administrators, **many still face barriers**, such as limited opportunities to connect, inconsistent staffing, and strained relationships with principals and other administrators.

The majority of nurses did not believe that awareness of school nursing among school administrators and parents increased in the past few years. Across all participant groups, respondents suggested that **awareness still needs to be raised** among parents, policy makers, and district-level administration.

NEXT STEPS: The Foundation plans to continue its efforts to build connections and awareness. New components of the work that are in development include a school health education program for school administrators, a template for school nurses to share updates with school leadership, and efforts to increase understanding of the school nurse role among parents.



3 Professional Development

Since May 2022, the Foundation developed and provided a number of professional development (PD) opportunities for school nurses in NEPA, informed by a Professional Development Gap Survey. These PD opportunities included in person and virtual learning sessions, distribution of school nurse textbooks, a National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners (PASNAP) membership campaign, and a school nurse mentoring program.

KEY LEARNINGS: School nurses reported that the PD opportunities supported by the Foundation provided them with desired **opportunities to enhance their skill sets and connect** with other school nurses. They tended to discover these opportunities through existing organizations, suggesting that the Foundation could continue to partner with NASN and PASNAP, local Intermediate Units, and others to promote and support PD opportunities.

The most common barriers to attending in-person PD opportunities were timing, availability, and location, with their impact varying by county.

NEXT STEPS: The Foundation plans to continue to work with its existing professional development partners, as well as welcome new opportunities, in its efforts to eliminate access barriers.



4 Staffing & Funding

After hearing concerns about heavy workloads and low compensation rates for school nurses, the Foundation focused efforts on researching existing and alternative funding and staffing models. In collaboration with the Center for School Health Innovation and Quality, the School Nurse Staffing and Funding Study delved deeper into the current NEPA school nurse funding and staffing models/shortages. The Foundation also explored potential alternative models that have worked in other parts of the country.

KEY LEARNINGS: Although the Foundation made several attempts to engage partners to pilot new school nurse staffing and funding models, none have yet materialized. However, the Foundation **added to a growing body of knowledge** on school nursing and shared information with key ecosystem actors, which is an important and appreciated part of the work.

NEXT STEPS: The Foundation will continue to look for opportunities to encourage innovative pilots and projects, as well as contribute research and data to the field of school health.

5 COVID-Related Needs

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation served as an ally and advocate for school nurses. The Foundation provided essential personal protective equipment for school nurse offices, one-year memberships to a mental health app, and connections to resources for school nurses to increase the wellness of students and their families.

KEY LEARNINGS: School nurses **experienced significant challenges** as they became the expert liaison between school health policy, parents, and school administration. They often lacked support, even as they took on additional time-consuming COVID-related tasks and paperwork, adding to their stresses.

NEXT STEPS: This strategy will be sunset due to the passing of the immediate emergency of the pandemic. The Foundation will remain alert and responsive to ongoing impacts of the pandemic, as well as any to new emergencies facing school nurses.