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Bureau of Special Education FY'10 Memo #20

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To: Superintendents
Special Education Directors

From: Office of the Commissioner

Division of Instruction
Bureau of Special Education

RE: Health Evaluation and Eligibility Determination

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE), Bureau of Special Education is offering guidance regarding the special education eligibility process when a health evaluation is required.

Ed 1107.04, Table 1100.1 outlines the required assessments and qualified examiners by type of educational disability category. The school district is responsible to evaluate in all areas of suspected disability at no cost to the parent. A health evaluation is required when a child is suspected of having an educational disability under autism, orthopedic impairment, other health impaired, and traumatic brain injury. This evaluation provides the IEP team with information on the child's physical condition and may include, but is not limited to, a physical assessment and/or health screening, a review of a child's medical history (if parent consents), classroom observations of the child with health related concerns, identification of health barriers to learning, etc., as determined by the IEP team. A qualified professional licensed to provide a health evaluation is anyone, who under their specific licensing is qualified to provide a health evaluation as described above. This may include, but is not limited to: a school nurse, a registered nurse, physician, psychiatrist, naturopathic doctors.

The health evaluation is not intended to provide a medical diagnosis; nor is a medical diagnosis required in the NH Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities to determine the eligibility of a child for special education. As defined by Ed 1108, the IEP team determines whether a child is a child with a disability by considering information from a variety of sources such as, evaluations and assessments, parent input and teacher input and recommendations, as well as information about the child's physical condition, social and cultural background, adaptive behavior, and functional performance.