

Nurses' Nook - clarification about physicals for school sports...

Spring sports have started and with it brings a flurry of physicals and questions from parents regarding physicals.

Regulations about physicals for school athletics are stipulated in three places: MA regulations, 105 cmr 200 and 105 cmr 201 (the concussion law), and the MIAA rule book (applies to high school sports). They all say that a student-athlete must have a physical on an annual basis *before* participating in athletics. The MIAA rule book actually stipulates that a physical expires 13 months to the day after the last physical and the student is then ineligible to participate any longer. Physicals must be done by a licensed physician (MD or DO), nurse practitioner (NP), or physician assistant (PA) and physicals done by health providers other than these mentioned are not allowed.

In addition, there is no provision in the regulations for a healthcare provider to write a note stating that the child can participate if the physical has expired unless he or she actually examines the child.

Even though the MIAA rule book only covers high school sports, MA state regulations cover students participating in school sponsored athletics at all other grade levels.

Please keep track of your child's last physical so he or she is not held out of practice/games for athletic ineligibility. Many parents use the CVS Minute Clinic or other such walk ins to get a sports physical should they have a scheduling mishap and the child's physical expires. This is a terrific alternative for this purpose but should never replace care from your child's regular health care provider, as he or she knows your child's health and immunization history.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the nurse in your child's school.