



## Parent group, teachers' union decry CPS nursing deficiencies

By Sarah Schulte

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CHICAGO (WLS) -- A parent group met with Chicago Public School officials to express concern about the nursing care for students with chronic health conditions. The group feels the care is inadequate and inconsistent.

Nicole Seidlitz is the parent of an 8-year-old daughter who is a CPS student and has type 1 diabetes. Seidlitz calls the school nursing care for her child a nightmare.

"We've had nurses who haven't dosed my daughter correctly, who have missed low blood sugars. Honestly, the first two weeks of school, I was waking up every day in the middle of the night and scared of what the day was going to bring," Seidlitz said.

For years, CPS has operated without a certified school nurse at every school. The Chicago Teachers Union says a typical nurse goes to 4 or 5 different schools a week. For students with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, the school district uses a private agency, which parents say results in a revolving door of nurses, some who don't even show up.

"My daughter loves school, she is a straight-A student, but she didn't want to go to school today because we thought there was going to be a new nurse today," said Seidlitz.

Seidlitz joined the parent group Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education for the meeting with CPS officials.

"We need a better solution. That's why we need CPS today to talk about creating solutions so children in these situations of continuity of care," said Raise Your Hand founder Wendy Katten.

The CTU is taking it one step further.

"We need a commitment on whoever is going to be the next mayor that they are going to have a school-certified nurse in every school," said CTU President Jesse Sharkey.

CPS CEO Janice Jackson said there is no nursing shortage, however, she admits the district must do a better job of coordination with the private nursing company.

"We are working with the company RCM to make sure the number of nurses serving our schools are consistent and we don't see some of the transition and turnover from different schools," Jackson said.

Raise Your Hand and CPS plan to meet again in 2 weeks.

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