Launch of the New Jersey School Physician Coalition and Navigating Liability

January 15, 2026

NJSPC
New Jersey School Physician Coalition

Acknowledgements

This program is made possible through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and collaboration with:

New Jersey State School Nurses Association
Leading, Teaching, Caring.

Princeton Nassau Pediatrics
general pediatrics adolescent medicine
www.princetonnassaupediatrics.com

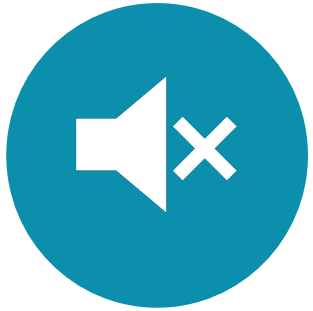
NJ4S

State of New Jersey Department of Education

Green Brook Family Medicine

Housekeeping

We encourage you to turn on your camera while engaging in the session.



Kindly remain on mute to reduce background noise when you are not speaking.

By participating in this sessions, you are consenting to being recorded.

To protect patient privacy, please refrain from sharing any protected health information (PHI).

Please unmute or use the chat function to engage in discussion with fellow participants and co-chairs.

Meet Our Co-Chairs

Bert Mandelbaum, MD, FAAP

Pediatrician | School Physician

- Chair, Department of Pediatrics, Penn Medicine Princeton Health
- Chair, NJAAP Task Force on Adolescent Health and School Start Times

Ronald Frank, MD, FAAFP

Family Medicine |School Physician

Together, they serve over 30+ school districts in New Jersey!

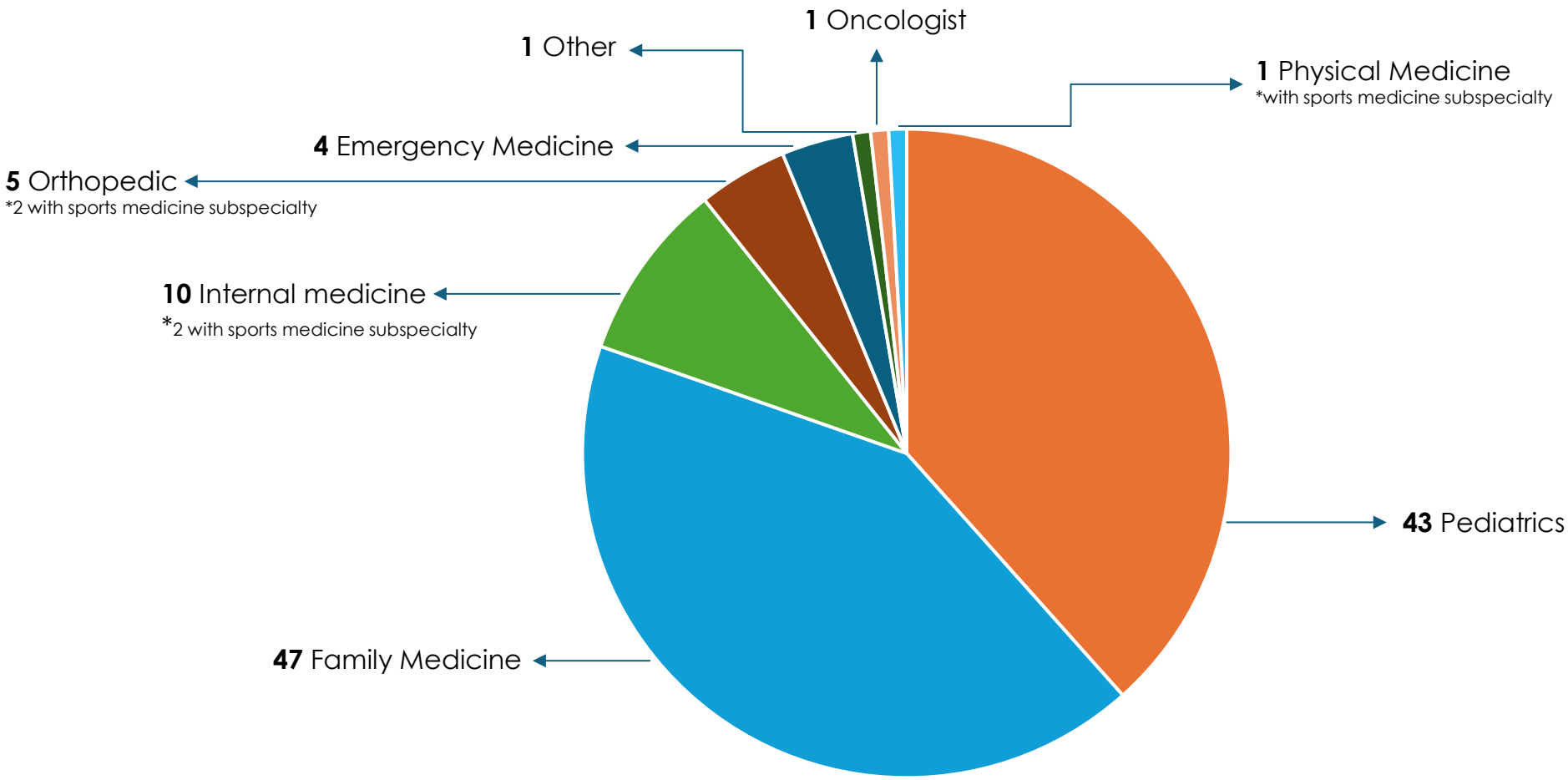
Overview of NJSPC

- The New Jersey School Physician Coalition (NJSPC) is a statewide network of school physicians and key partners working together to support student health and well-being.
- Our mission is to enhance the role of healthcare in the school system, advocate for policies that prioritize student wellness, and equip school physicians and staff with the tools and connections they need to help students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Through collaboration, education, and advocacy, NJSPC strengthens the bridge between health and education, ensuring that every student has access to a safe and supportive learning environment.

New Jersey School Physician Data

- There are approximately **800 school districts** (including charters)
- There are approximately **539 school physicians**
- On average, physicians cover between **1-5 school districts**
- Approximately **5 physicians** cover 8-15 school districts
- Approximately **2 physicians** cover 15+ school districts

Internal School Physician Survey



112 Total Survey Responses

NJSPC
New Jersey School Physician Coalition

Identify Your Medical Specialty

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XHQQWK3

Role of School Physicians

- School physicians play a **critical role** in shaping the services provided in the school and supporting the delivery of school health services through sound protocols and procedures
- Consults in the development and implementation of school district policies, procedures and mechanisms related to health, safety and medical emergencies pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1(a);
- Must be licensed to practice **medicine** or **osteopathy**.
- Each district board of education shall **appoint** a school physician pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-1
  - 800+ school districts (including charters)
  - One physician can cover multiple districts

Collaborative Action with School Physicians

- School physicians have often operated in silos; advocacy and collaboration on the state, local, and county/regional level are crucial
- Collaboration among school physicians and key stakeholders offers the opportunity to:
  - Bridge the gap of school health and policy at the local and state level
  - Bring public health and education partners together to promote school health
  - Exchange evidence-based best practices and offer shared learning and professional development opportunities
  - Champion and expand the physician's role in school wellness

School Physician Liability

- Princeton Malpractice Insurance

  → Does not cover school physician administrative duties

  → Only covers "direct patient care" provided to an individual
- Business Liability Insurance

  → Does not cover school physician administrative duties

Need an additional policy for professional liability regarding school physician duties

Malpractice Insurance

Kevin Byrne, Senior VP
Alliant Insurance Services
Email: Kevin.Byrne@alliant.com
Phone Number: 908-783-2567

Coverage

- School physicians consult in the development and implementation of school district policies, procedures and mechanisms related to health, safety and medical emergencies pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1(a);
- Your Mal-Practice policy only covers "direct patient care". Any role related to **consultation** as noted above is NOT covered.
- We have discovered that the school district/board coverage also does NOT cover the **physicians** for this role.

Anyone can be named in a lawsuit for any reason – directly and indirectly!

Looking Ahead - 2026 Priorities

- Coalition meetings are designed specifically for school physicians
- **Future Coalition Meetings**
  - March 2026 | Time: 12:00pm-1:00 pm | via Zoom | Topic TBD
  - May 2026 | Time: 12:00pm-1:00 pm | via Zoom | Topic TBD
- **Upcoming Topics to Consider:**
  - Standing Orders
  - Legal Issues
  - Home Instruction Request
  - Mental Health Diagnosis
  - Diabetes
  - Concussions
  - Seizures

Questions?

Evaluation

Reminder:

Please be sure to complete the session evaluation at:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z6YDRX5

Thank You!

Contact us:

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