



## Frequently Asked Questions about Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Effort (CARE) Pilot Project:

### *A Partnership between DC Public Schools, DC Health, and Local Doctors and Nurses to Support Children's Health and Attendance in School*

#### 1. What is the CARE project?

At DC Public Schools (DCPS), we value the health and wellbeing of our students. We know that students who are healthy are better able to come to school and learn. We are pleased to share that DCPS is partnering with local doctors, nurses, and the DC Department of Health on a project to support our students' health and attendance in school. This project started in school year 2017-2018 and will continue into school year 2022-2023.

Through the pilot project -- which is called the **Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Effort** or **CARE** -- parents or guardians can give permission to DCPS to securely share attendance information with their child's doctor(s), nurse(s), and medical office staff. This information will help these healthcare professionals to provide special outreach and medical attention to children that might be missing school and their families.

#### 2. I'm a DCPS parent. How will this project help my child?

Doctors, nurses, and their staff are able to provide special outreach and medical attention if your child might be missing school. For example, your child's doctor may be able to recommend a new or different medication to help make your child feel better and to better control your child's asthma, allergies, or other condition. The medical care team may also be able to support other common issues for getting to school, such as transportation or child care needs.

#### 3. Why are DCPS and local doctors and nurses interested in making this connection?

DCPS and local medical providers share the goal of physically and mentally healthy children who are at school, every day, ready to learn. For many students with medical conditions such as asthma, allergies, sickle cell anemia, and diabetes, this can be harder. DCPS and local doctors and nurses are partnering to see if we can better support students' health and wellbeing when doctors and nurses know more about school attendance. Ultimately, we hope this will help students improve their academics.

#### 4. How will attendance information move from the school to a child's doctor?

With parental permission, attendance information will be sent securely from DCPS to your child's doctor through the [Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients](#) (CRISP). This is the regional organization that today provides secure access to medical data to thousands of local physicians. CRISP has patient lists from many local doctors and will share data only with the office of the child's listed doctor.

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### 5. Which schools are participating in the pilot?

Currently, the following schools are participating in CARE: Bancroft Elementary, Cardozo Education Campus, Columbia Heights Education Campus, H.D. Cooke Elementary, Marie Reed Elementary, Powell Elementary, Boone Elementary, Burrville Elementary, Hendley Elementary, Ketcham Elementary, Savoy Elementary, Smothers Elementary, Thomas Elementary, and Turner Elementary.

These schools were chosen for many reasons. First, we looked at schools with a large number of students who see medical providers who participate with CRISP and are interested in participating in the pilot program. Second, we wanted schools with a large number of students with asthma and other medical conditions, as we know these conditions often make it more difficult for students to attend school every day. Finally, we looked for schools where the front office teams are interested and willing to take the extra steps of obtaining and documenting consent when families want to participate. Each of the pilot schools met these factors.

### 6. How can my family participate?

To participate, please complete the CRISP consent form, which is available in the main office of participating schools, from your school nurse, or at your child's medical provider's office. Parents can withdraw their consent at any time.

### 7. Who will have access to my child's attendance information?

Only doctors and nurses who participate in CRISP and identify your child as one of their patients will have access to your child's attendance data.

### 8. How is data kept safe in CRISP?

Protecting patient information in CRISP is a priority. CRISP follows all state and federal privacy and security laws to protect patient health information. The Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy, Security, and Breach Notification Rules are the main Federal laws that protect your health information. CRISP considers the privacy and security protections outlined by these laws to be minimum standards, and many of CRISP policies go above and beyond what is really required by law.

All information is transmitted using a secure data transfer tunnel which is made available in an encrypted e-mail or secure web-portal. In addition, CRISP requires all participating providers to adhere to standards for identity proofing, ensuring that all people who have access to data made available by CRISP are permitted to do so.

### 9. If we participate in this program, will my child's health information be shared directly with the school?

No. Through this project, attendance data will go to medical providers, but no health information will flow from the medical provider to the school without separate consent.

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### 10. What other details are helpful for parents to know?

Nearly all pediatricians in DC are signed up to participate with CRISP. However, if your doctor is not, he or she will not be able to receive the attendance information.

Once a student is signed up, his/her attendance information will be shared with his/her doctor(s) or nurses(s) as long as he/she is enrolled at any of the participating pilot schools. If the child switches doctors, the data will be shared with the new doctor once the doctor's patient list is updated.

### 11. How often will I need to give this consent?

Your consent will continue through your child's enrollment at DCPS, unless you withdraw your consent in writing. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

### 12. I have questions about the CARE Project. Whom can I contact??

If you have questions, please speak with your child's school registrar, school nurse, or medical provider. You can also contact the DCPS Health and Wellness team at [healthservices.dcps@k12.dc.gov](mailto:healthservices.dcps@k12.dc.gov).

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