

My name is Carly Boom and I've been a registered nurse for ten years. I've worked in many different specialties and most recently began work at West Central School District as the head of nursing starting in April of 2023. I initially took the job for better hours, a shorter commute, and more time with my growing family. After getting over the fear of starting a new role and being the only medical professional in the Hartford schools; I realized that this new venture was more than just a job, it was my calling.

During my first full year as a school nurse, I learned the true dangers of marijuana. I grew to know a seventh grade student who had many challenges. She was without stable housing, had an absent father, a mother who used substances, and her only brother was constantly in trouble. I would often get called to the middle school to treat her fresh wounds following an episode of cutting.

I received an urgent call from the middle school counselor who said she was talking with this student in the bathroom and she was no longer responding. I grabbed Narcan and drove quickly from the elementary school to the middle school. After meeting the student and counselor in the bathroom, I crawled under the locked bathroom stall door and found the student slumped over on the stool, eyes closed and mumbling. Her respirations were slow. The counselor alerted administration and our school resource officer (SRO) of the situation and brought the AED to the bathroom. Our SRO called 911. The SRO and I lowered the student to the floor and I placed my coat under her head. Her respiratory status was not improving and I administered a dose of Narcan while taking her vitals and listening to heart and lungs. The student remained minimally responsive. The EMTs arrived quickly and she became somewhat responsive. The school was put on lockdown and the student was taken by ambulance to the emergency department at a Sioux Falls hospital.

A few days later we found out the student had an empty vape cartridge that she filled with marijuana tar. The student said she had never tried marijuana before and during her initial exposure, took seven hits. She also admitted to taking multiple ondansetron tablets in attempt to kill herself. Ondansetron is a prescription anti-emetic (anti-nausea) medication used to slow gastric motility leading to decreased nausea and vomiting.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share my experiences as a school nurse with the committee.