

March 3, 2020

SUPPORT-BRYNLEIGH'S ACT-SB0549

To the members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

My family is writing in support of the Maryland Seizure Safe School Act, or Brynleigh's Act, sponsored by Delegate Kerr in the House (HB 675) and Senator Young in the Senate (SB 549). This legislation would ensure all school personnel are not only prepared but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to students experiencing seizures.

Our son, Jake, was diagnosed with refractory epilepsy at the age of three. He has had many seizures at school and thanks to the knowledge and vigilance of the school personnel he was able to receive lifesaving rescue medication in a timely manner, thus preventing a tragic outcome or other long-term consequences from having a prolonged seizure. The importance of having appropriately trained personnel who can remain calm and act quickly cannot be overstated.

Approximately one in 26 people will develop epilepsy in their lifetime, one in ten people will have a single seizure in their lifetime. While approximately 7,900 Maryland children currently have an active epilepsy diagnosis, there is only one school nurse per 913 students. It is of vital importance that school staff know how to recognize and respond to a seizure should one occur in their classroom, school bus, or specialized area. Quick response to a seizure cannot wait for a nurse to arrive and it is not enough for school nurses to be the only ones with that training. Many students will have their first seizure while in school, so this is not just a matter of following a plan that is already in place. Some will have seizures in front of their classmates; when personnel are able to respond calmly and knowledgably it makes the experience safer and less scary for everyone.

Brynleigh's Act will ensure that all school personnel have some familiarity with seizure recognition, and in doing so, will make all our children safer in their school environment. Five other states have passed similar bills, and more are taking it up this session. We hope that Maryland will, as always, lead by example. Please support this legislation, for my family and others like us.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Levin and Paul Griffin

13816 Alderton Road

Silver Spring, MD 20906      301.254.2745