

March 3, 2020

SUPPORT-SB0549-BRYNLEIGH'S ACT

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

My family are your constituents, and we are writing in support of the SB0549 Brynleigh's Act, sponsored by Senator Young in the Senate. This state legislation would ensure all school personnel, including nurses, teachers, and volunteers, are not only prepared but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to students experiencing seizures.

My child, Mark, at the age of two was diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder, SCN2A, which predisposes him to seizures. At any moment our son could have a life altering seizure, and the types of seizure he could have significantly vary, and may not be so obvious. We have specific language in his IEP that instructs staff on ways to avoid triggering a seizure but specialized training of all personnel who come in contact with him regarding recognition of a seizure, and safety steps are essential to his, and his classmates safety.

Approximately 1 in 26 people will develop epilepsy in their lifetime, 1 in 10 people will have a single seizure in their lifetime, and approximately 7900 Maryland children currently have an active epilepsy diagnosis, but there is only one 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. 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 many other states will follow. We hope that Maryland will, as always, lead by example. Please support this legislation, for my family and others like us.

Sincerely,

Angie Auldridge

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