

SUPPORT-SB0549-BRYNLEIGH'S ACT

3/3/2020

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

My family are your constituents, and we are writing in support of the Maryland Seizure Safe School Act, or Brynleigh Act's, sponsored by Senator Young in the Senate and Representative Kerr in the House. 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 student Brynleigh Shillinger is diagnosed with TSC epilepsy. As a school-based team, we were fortunate enough to participate in a training from the epilepsy foundation and it has changed our lives. Brynleigh is a kindergartener and the thought of our sweet girl experiencing a seizure on our watch is a real and scary possibility. After having this training, we feel prepared to identify the signs of a seizure and to be able to provide the proper care for Brynleigh because she is counting on us to keep her safe. This training is critical for all educators to have so that they are able to feel confident in the care of all of their students.

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.

The Brynleigh 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,

Amanda Murphy, Special Educator

212 Broad Street

Middletown, Maryland 21768

Carroll Manor Elementary School

5624 Adamstown Road

Adamstown, MD 21710