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Legislative District 24
Prince George's County

Finance Committee

Joint Committees

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Joanne C. Benson

SB 380: Public Health - Emergency and Allergy Treatment Program - Nurse Practitioners

Good Afternoon Chair Kelley, Vice-Chairman Feldman, and Members of the Committee. I am happy to introduce SB 380- Public Health – Emergency and Allergy Treatment Program –Nurse Practitioners. This is a very important bill because it authorizes nurse practitioners to prescribe and dispense auto-injectable epinephrine, commonly referred to as an epi-pen, to certain certificate holders who operate youth camps. Nurse Practitioners licensed in Maryland have full practice and prescriptive authority according to the annotated Code of Maryland (statute) and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 10.27.07.02). This allows them to independently practice and prescribe medications. This bill, adding nurse practitioners to those able to prescribe epinephrine (epi-pen) to youth camps, is merely a clarifying change. It is important that nurse practitioners, especially those working at youth camps, can prescribe and dispense epinephrine (epi-pen) and the related paraphernalia to keep the children in our youth camps around the state safe.

Nurse practitioners can and do currently prescribe epinephrine (epi-pen) to individuals who have documented life-threatening allergic reactions when exposed to certain environmental or food allergens. Youth camps should be a place of fun and safety for children as it was for many of us growing up. The responsibility should not be placed solely on the child to correctly and profoundly communicate their food allergens to adults and safely inject themselves with a needle if something goes wrong at all times. A measure must be taken in the chance of a child not being able to communicate their allergens, safely apply an epi-pen to themselves or when a parent is not present to do so. Children will be the future lawyers, doctors, or even senators of our country and all measures should be taken to preserve their precious lives.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable vote. With me today are members of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland (NPAM) who will further elaborate on this very necessary change and answer any specific questions you may have.

Thus I urge a favorable report for SB 380