

March 2, 2020

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

I am a pediatric resident at Sinai Hospital and future neurodevelopmental physician. I am writing in support of the Maryland Seizure Safe School Act, or Brynleigh Act, which calls for state legislation to ensure all school personnel are not only prepared but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to students experiencing seizures.

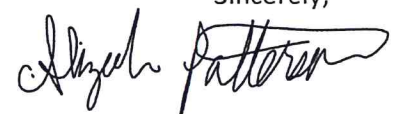
As a 2nd year pediatric resident, my experience with patients who have seizures is limited. However, I have a unique perspective being a teacher prior to medical school and now taking care of patients as a physician. When I was a new teacher, I was responsible for 120 children during the school day. I was fortunate enough to not have encountered a student having a seizure in my class, because I would not have known what to do. As a physician I have learned how quickly a seizure can begin and how detrimental the effects can be to a child's developing brain. Not being able to act quickly can literally be the difference between returning to a normal life versus death.

The Brynleigh Act would provide school staff with basic training to recognize the different presentations of seizures and to provide basic first aid in that situation, which is especially important in cases when a child does not have a known seizure disorder. This would provide reassurance and a sense of safety for not only the students but also the staff interacting with students. For children with epilepsy, chronic recurrent seizures, a seizure action plan is another component of this Act that provides peace of mind for families, students, and school staff.

Another view on this situation is the view of a parent. I have two boys, and should they have a seizure in school, I would want them surrounded by people who could ensure their safety when I cannot be there.

As a physician, a former teacher, and a parent, I ask that you vote in favor of HB0549, The Brynleigh Act, to provide a safer school environment for the children in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Alizah Patterson, MD

Pediatric Resident, Sinai Hospital of Baltimore