

February 28, 2020

Senate Finance Committee

I'm writing on behalf of my son in support of SB 477. We currently live in southern York County, PA. But, I am from MD, our family still lives there, and we are in MD very often. We vacation in Ocean City MD in the summer as well. I think SB 477 is very important for those living with life threatening food allergy. My son, Dustin, 14 years old, is one of those affected by food allergy. He has a history of anaphylaxis. We almost lost him when he was just under two years old. His peanut ige numbers are extremely high (currently 174 with ara h 1-3 in the 60's). It's very unlikely he will ever outgrow his allergies.

This bill is not only important to those who live with food allergy that reside in MD, but also those like my son who visit MD often and vacation in Ocean City MD.

Many in the surrounding states such as PA, VA, DE, flock to MD attractions such as Ocean City, the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, major league sports arenas, etc...

One of my biggest fears is that my son will have a severe reaction and need more Epinephrine than what we are carrying. I've read many stories where up to five and six injections were needed.

We need more awareness raised. Especially in the restaurant industry. There are so many out there that don't carry their epinephrine auto injectors. I have spoken with many in MD (work in MD as well at a restaurant/bar) with a food allergy. They themselves don't understand there are dangers of cross contact. They need to question the oil in the fryer, the prepping area, utensils, the drinks, the dressings as well as the main meal.

The reason why there is such a gap in knowledge between those allergic is because of their experiences. My son suffered anaphylaxis right off the bat. Almost losing him drove me to educate myself as much as possible to keep him safe and to educate him as he grew. Those who have only suffered mild reactions are usually the ones I've spoken with that don't understand the unpredictable nature of food allergy. You can't base future reactions off of past reactions. And it's been my experience that those are the individuals who don't carry epinephrine wherever they go. This Bill would give some protection to those individuals. It would protect those who needed more epinephrine. And, it would also protect those unaware they have a food allergy. You can develop a food allergy at any time in your life. That's a scary thought.

For all of these reasons and more, I urge a favorable report on SB 477. My hope is that my voice and every individual affected by food allergy is heard when all are deciding on this Bill. We need to protect those with food allergy as best we can. The most logical place to start is in food establishments.

Tricia Lader

Mom of an anaphylactic FA child and FA support group leader