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*SB0549- Support – Brynleigh's Act*

My daughter, Aaronica Burrell, was diagnosed in April 2013 with Juvenile Myoclonic Epilepsy. She was 14 years old in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. While she had her first series of seizures at home, she returned to school continuing to have seizures. This occurred without warning and immediately became a learning process for me and my family. As her mother, I had to spend time at the school explaining to the school nurse who wasn't a registered nurse, what happens when she has seizures and how to protect Aaronica should a seizure occur. In addition, it involved sharing with the first responder at the school, what needs to happen should Aaronica have a seizure in the classroom, in the school and even on the stairs. Fortunately for my family, she was assigned a buddy to travel with her to and from class, to the restroom and in the locker room for gym class.

The importance of Brynleigh's Act in MARYland is that it would require that personnel including school nurses, first responders and athletic directors be trained in seizure first aid. The safety and protection of our students should be of primary concern. The Epilepsy Foundation provides this training and education to school-based staff and nurses free of charge. As a parent, who has dealt with this issue for 6 years now, I still become nervous when Aaronica is walking around the campus at the Community College of Baltimore County. I wonder who knows what to do if they see someone having a seizure, will anyone help or assist her if she needs it? If people are educated and trained at every level of education, look how many more people will be informed in the future. Students are being misdiagnosed and educators are uninformed. You wonder why that student in your class seems to be disinterested or staring off during instruction, maybe just maybe they are having an absence seizure. If you know the signs, you can make a difference.

We have to remove the stigmas and the embarrassment. Anyone with a brain can stop seizures!