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February 21, 2020

Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:
HB675 Education – Public Schools – Seizure Action Plans (Brynleigh’s Act)

This past December 2019, I was contacted Lauren Shillinger in the hope that Maryland would create seizure safe school legislation. Lauren was concerned not only about her daughter Brynleigh, for whom this act would be named, but all students and staff in Maryland living with seizures and epilepsy. She has worked and advocated tirelessly for this cause.

Currently, there are only five states in the country that have laws to protect children who have seizures during the school day. Ten more are looking at similar legislation right now, so this is important and timely. It is our hope that Maryland will be the next state to train teachers and school staff in seizure recognition and first aid.

Epilepsy refers to more than 20 different types of seizure activity. 1 out of 10 people worldwide will have a seizure in their lifetime. Epilepsy, or recurring seizures, develops in 1 in 26 people during their lifetime.

A commonly used definition of epilepsy heretofore has been two unprovoked seizures more than 24 hours apart. Seizures and epilepsy are not the same. A seizure is an event and epilepsy is the disease involving recurrent unprovoked seizures. Epilepsy, simply put, is diagnosed after 2 or more unprovoked seizures. The cause is unknown in 70 percent of all cases of epilepsy

About 1.5 million people in America have epilepsy, and 25 percent of new cases of epilepsy occur in children 14 years and younger. This makes it highly likely that a child’s first unprovoked seizure will take place at school and population-based estimates suggest that, every year, 25,000 to 40,000 children in the United States experience a first unprovoked seizure.

This bill does not only address epilepsy, but addresses the symptom, of experiencing a seizure that is common among many disorders, or could be undiagnosed. It provides a level of security to all parents. Because 1 in 10 people will experience a seizure in their lifetime, and even if an individual has not experienced one before, they could always experience their first, and having seizure first aid in schools will help these children or adults greatly.

A seizure in a school child is frightening for all involved. An untrained teacher will often panic, further traumatizing children, and individual having the seizure, and creating stigma about the symptom. The greatest most effective antidote to fear is knowledge. What HB 675 does is just that. It requires that every public school will have at least two adults trained in seizure management. We request a favorable report on HB 0675

Respectfully,
Delegate Kenneth P. Kerr
District 3B – Frederick County