the parents'place of Maryland

January 7, 2020

To whom it may concern,

The Parents' Place of Maryland, as the statewide Parent Training and Health Information Center, we answer calls from over 7,000 families and professionals each and every day who have questions about seizures. That is why we are writing in support of the Maryland Seizure Safe School Act, or Brynleigh Act, which calls for state legislation to ensure all school personnel, including nurses, teachers, and volunteers, are not only prepared but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to students experiencing seizures. Approximately 1 in 26 people will develop epilepsy in their lifetime, 1 in 10 people will have a single seizure in their lifetime, and approximately 7900 Maryland children currently have an active epilepsy diagnosis, but there is only one nurse per 913 students. It is of vital importance that school staff know how to recognize and respond to a seizure should one occur in their classroom, school bus, or specialized area. Quick response to a seizure is vital and cannot wait for a nurse to arrive. It is not enough for school nurses to be the only ones with that training. Many students will have their first seizure while in school, so this is not just a matter of following a plan that is already in place.

The Brynleigh Act will ensure that all school personnel have some familiarity with seizure recognition, and in doing so, will make all our children safer in their school environment. Four other states have passed similar bills, and many other states will follow. We hope that Maryland will, as always, led by example. We stand with the Epilepsy Foundation in supporting this legislation.

PPMD has been serving MD families who have children with disabilities and special healthcare needs for almost 30 years. Seizures and epilepsy can be so very scary and hard for families so by having this legislation in place so school staff can be trained will bring such a peace of mind for both professionals and families.

Sincerely,

Rene Averitt-Sanzone
Executive Director