



Support-HB0370

01/07/2021

Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee Members
House Office Building Room 131
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Ways and Means Committee Members:

On behalf of the pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and fellow pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) Chesapeake Chapter, I am writing to express our support of HB0370/ SB0225 bill, the "Education - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Seizure Action Plans (Brynleigh's Act)".

The Maryland Chesapeake Chapter of NAPNAP believes this piece of legislation will play a vital role in protecting students who suffer from epilepsy or a seizure disorder. This legislation would ensure that school personnel, including nurses, teachers, and volunteers, are prepared to care for a student experiencing a seizure. It would train them recognize a seizure and respond appropriately and efficiently to the student experiencing a seizure.

Epilepsy is a broad term used for conditions that affect the brain that is characterized by recurrent and unpredictable seizures which affect a variety of mental and physical functions. About 0.6% of children aged have active epilepsy in the United States. In 2013, that was about 460,000 children. This means that 6 students out of 1,000 students experience epilepsy. According to the CDC, over 7900 students in Maryland are diagnosed with epilepsy. For many children, epilepsy is easily controlled with medications, however for some the condition can be more challenging and a seizure could occur at any time. Since children attend school about six hours a day, approximately 180 days per year therefore teachers, office staff, bus drivers, and others in addition to a school nurse are likely to witness a seizure.

This bill will provide training to allow teachers, teacher's aides, office staff, bus drivers, and others to recognize seizures, provide first aid, and understand how epilepsy may affect a student. School nurses already have this training, however there are 913 students per school nurse in Maryland (National Education Association, 2019). School nurses cannot and should not be the sole provider responsible for recognizing and responding to a seizure. In addition, more than half of Maryland's secondary schools had a lead health education teacher who wanted professional development on epilepsy or seizure disorder but only 23.9 percent actually received this development (CDC, 2014). There are currently five states that have passed similar legislation and approximately 18 states who are in the process of passing legislation similar to "Education - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Seizure Action Plans (Brynleigh's Act)."

Even more importantly, the legislation will allow a student to have a seizure action plan on file. This action plan would be available and distributed to any school personnel or volunteer who is responsible for the supervision or care of a child diagnosed with a seizure disorder. The seizure action



plan would direct the treatment of an individual's seizure by the student's personal health care provider. The seizure action plan would allow the nurse to administer necessary and oftentimes life-saving medication according to the prescriber's guidelines.

Lastly, this bill will bring awareness to the entire educational community including teacher's, aides, bus drivers, volunteers, office staff and even student peers. This would allow students living with epilepsy or a seizure disorder to feel safe in school, reach their full academic potential, and build meaningful friendships with peers and decrease the stigma associated with a seizure disorder.

For these reasons the Maryland Chesapeake Chapter of NAPNAP extends their support to HB0370/SB0225 bill, the "Education - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Seizure Action Plans (Brynleigh's Act)". The pediatric advanced practice nurses of your state are grateful to you for your attention to these crucial issues. The members of Chesapeake Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners are committed to improving the health and advocating for of Maryland's pediatric patients. If we can be of any further assistance, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Deborah Busch, the Chesapeake Chapter President at 410-614-6284 or dbusch1@jhu.edu.

Sincerely,

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay J. Ward".

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