

Education- Public and Nonpublic Schools- Seizure Action Plans (Brynleigh's Act)
House Ways and Means Committee
January 20, 2021

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and furthering the rights, opportunities, and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are writing this letter in support of the Maryland Seizure Safe School Act, or Brynleigh's Act. The legislation would require an individualized, written seizure action plan for each student with a seizure disorder attending a public school. The bill would also require training for school personnel and age-appropriate seizure education for students. This training will not only help the student; it will also help decrease the stigma associated with seizures and will help members of a student's school community support a student who may have a seizure during school hours.

There are approximately 7,900 children living with epilepsy in Maryland. This amounts to a ratio of roughly 913 students for every 1 school nurse. Education, information, and training on seizure recognition would ensure school personnel are prepared and can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to a student experiencing a seizure, thus creating a safer environment for every student in Maryland's public schools. Importantly, the bill provides for the presence of a registered nurse to fulfill the training requirements for a school and for annual training to school personnel with direct contact and supervision of students to recognize the signs and symptoms of a seizure.

Parents, as critical partners in education, would be actively involved in collaboration with school personnel to create a seizure action plan for their student with a seizure condition. That plan will be kept by the school and provided to staff and volunteers with direct contact with the student.

School personnel must be prepared and enabled to respond quickly and safely to seizure incidents. Often, care to a student who is having a seizure cannot wait for a nurse to arrive.

Five states have passed laws similar to this proposal, and other states are currently considering comparable legislation. We stand with the Epilepsy Foundation in supporting this legislation.

We hope that Maryland will follow in its tradition of leading by example to create positive school learning environments that are supportive and welcoming to all students.

Sincerely,



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