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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 15, 2021

RE: Testimony HB609, Public and Non-Public Schools – Bronchodilator Availability and Use Policy (Bronchodilator Rescue Inhaler Law)

Good Afternoon Way and Means Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

For the record, I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce testifying today on HB609 Public and Non-Public Schools – Bronchodilator Availability and Use Policy (Bronchodilator Rescue Inhaler Law).

HB609 requires public schools in the state, and authorizes nonpublic schools in the state, to establish a policy to stock inhalers (albuterol) in schools for emergency purposes (recue inhaler), requiring select school personnel to be trained to administer the inhaler in the absence of a school nurse and removes personal liability of nurse and personnel.

According to the Asthma and Allergy Network, 16.4% of Maryland Children, have been diagnosed with asthma, 56% of children with asthma do not have an asthma plan on file at their school, and it is reported that 19.2% of parents with asthmatic children report that their children missed 1-2 days of school because of their asthma. Asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism in the country alone. Add to those stats the number of individuals who haven't been diagnosed with asthmas and the growing shortage of school nurses, we have a risk management dilemma. In the U.S., asthma is responsible of 10 deaths a day. Given these stats and risks, states are considering stock albuterol (rescue inhalers) in policy and guidelines. Currently, 10 states (Arizona, New Hampshire, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah) have stock albuterol laws, and three states (New York, Nebraska, and Indiana) have stock albuterol guidelines. At the federal level, Congressman Steny Hoyer introduced and passed HR2468 "School Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act", December 2020. The bill amends the Public Health Service Act to increase the preference given in awarding certain allergy and asthma related grants to states that require certain public schools to have allergy and asthma management programs. This federal act allows states to create and implement programs as needed with financial assistance. This couldn't be timelier!!

What I've learned about Asthma is that you cannot diagnoses it without first having an incident, or an asthma attack. Unfortunately for some, an asthmatic incident or attack is the first and last sign of a respiratory condition.

Since March of last year to date, a deadly respiratory virus disproportionately affects those with respiratory conditions, an inhaler is as important and lifesaving as the current promising vaccine,

an EpiPen, and Naloxone (Narcan). It must be available in our schools, and it must be added as a stock item to the lifesaving tool box for our schools and school professionals.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB609. I ask for a favorable report.

Regina T. Boyce