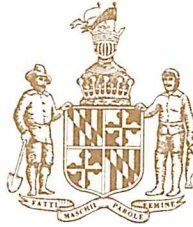


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February 3, 2022

SB299 - SUPPORT

Education – Public and Nonpublic Schools – Seizure Action Plans
(Brynleigh’s Act)

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

The World Health Organization states that epilepsy is the most common serious brain disorder in the world. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 3.4 million Americans, roughly 1 in 26 people, are affected by Epilepsy.¹ Maryland has approximately 59,900 people (including teachers, administrators, and other school staff) with epilepsy. Of these people, 8,000 are children and teens.² The CDC estimates that approximately 0.6% of all children ages 0-17 years have active epilepsy.¹ That means that in a school with a 1,000 students, six (6) would be living with epilepsy.¹

And yet a seizure action plan is absent from the current Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) public standards and guidelines regarding emergency care for students with special health needs. SB299 seeks to correct this oversight and provide the necessary awareness and training to school personnel to better address the needs of the 8,000 students in our care.

Epilepsy is a common disorder of the brain that causes recurring seizures.³ Studies have shown that children with epilepsy miss 11 or more days of school each year due to the illness.⁷ Direct access to school nursing and other health services, as well as disease-specific education, has been shown to improve health and academic outcomes among students with chronic health conditions.⁴ Furthermore, whereas almost half (48.2%) of lead health education teachers in secondary schools wanted professional development on epilepsy or seizures, only 23.4% received the training.⁴

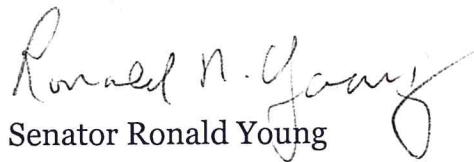
Working in concert with the stakeholders of the bill over the past year, SB299 reflects the input from prior year bills. In recognition of the ongoing levels of training required of school personnel, SB299 requires advanced training of only two (2) school personnel, approved by the school nurse, in recognizing the signs and symptoms of a seizure, appropriate first aid, and administering seizure rescue medication and manual vagus nerve stimulation.⁹ Additional training for other school staff in recognizing a seizure and providing first aid would only be required every 2 years and could be administered digitally if possible. The Epilepsy Foundation of America and other interested stakeholders would be consulted in developing the required seizure disorder guidelines and training programs.

SB299 does not affect current law requirements regarding seizures in a student's Independent Education Plan and/or 504 plans. In addition, non-public schools have the option to comply with requirements established in the bill.

As a result, SB299 has the support of the ARC of Maryland, the Epilepsy Foundation, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, the Disability Rights Maryland, the Chesapeake chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, The Maryland School Nurses Association, Kennedy Krieger Institute, and the Maryland Association of Board of Education.

I ask that you **vote favorably on SB299** to protect Maryland children with epilepsy by implementing a practical and uniform standard of care in schools across the state.

Respectfully,



Senator Ronald Young

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