



March 22, 2022

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Ways and Means Committee Members:

The Epilepsy Foundation and our local chapter, Epilepsy Foundation Maryland, are pleased to support Senate Bill 299 as amended, also known as *Brynleigh's Act*. We urge the committee to vote favorably and swiftly for this legislation. The bill would safeguard physician-directed care by ensuring the administration of FDA-approved medications and require school personnel to receive potentially life-saving seizure recognition and first aid training. To date, 12 states, including our neighbor Virginia, have passed similar legislation. Together, we can make sure Maryland is at the forefront of this important nationwide initiative.

The Epilepsy Foundation of America, headquartered in Bowie, Maryland, is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the 3.4 million Americans living with epilepsy, including approximately 59,900 people in Maryland. Epilepsy is a medical condition characterized by recurrent seizures, which are sudden surges of electrical activity in the brain, that affect a variety of mental and physical functions. Epilepsy is the fourth most common neurological disorder. The incidence of epilepsy is highest in children and older adults. 1 in every 26 individuals live with epilepsy, and 1 in every 10 will have a seizure at some point in their lifetime.

Members of the school community would be the first to respond to medical emergency situations at school. We believe they should be prepared if a student experiences a seizure. An individual does not need to have a diagnosis of epilepsy to have seizures, as they are associated with other medical conditions such as diabetes, autism, and head injuries from high-contact sports. This legislation would benefit not only the 7,900 children in Maryland diagnosed with epilepsy but also other children with disabilities that may have seizures as a symptom of their condition. It would also benefit those children who experience their first seizure while at school. *Brynleigh's Act* would undoubtedly help keep students who experience seizures safer at school, but the impact of this legislation would reach far beyond that. A seizure can happen to anyone, in any place, at any time, and individuals who are familiar with seizure first aid can help keep Marylanders safe within and beyond the school walls.

Passing Seizure Safe Schools legislation in our home state would mean a lot to the Epilepsy Foundation and our 23 Maryland-based employees who have dedicated their efforts to fighting for the epilepsy community. We are hopeful for your support for swift passage through the committee. Please feel free to contact Dominique Brown, Senior Manager, State Relations and Public Policy, Epilepsy Foundation at dbrown@efa.org with any questions or follow-up.

Sincerely,

Laura Thrall
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation

National Headquarters

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