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Testimony for House Bill 266
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Public and Nonpublic Schools – Bronchodilator Availability and Use – Policy
(Bronchodilator Rescue Inhaler Law)
Favorable with Amendments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony today. My name is Micaela Fritz, and I am a pediatric nurse practitioner at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Prior to my role as a nurse practitioner at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center, I was a school nurse for Howard County Public School System through December 2021. I am testifying today in support of this bill with amendments that would provide emergency albuterol in schools to all children.

I would like to note that the views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of my employer, Johns Hopkins Hospital.

In my previous experience as a school nurse, I was responsible for the medical care of over 800 middle school students at a public school. Many of the students I cared for had chronic medical conditions, including asthma. I had an incident in Fall of 2021 where a student who was a known asthmatic needed albuterol. I administered albuterol as prescribed, his cough subsided, and he returned to class. Approximately 4 hours later, he returned with audible wheezing and a violent cough that caused him to vomit continuously. I tried to administer his albuterol inhaler again, however, the pump stopped working. The student had an extra albuterol inhaler in his pocket that his mom had given him that morning. Under the guidelines, I should have confiscated this medication and not allowed him to use it. Instead, he self-administered the albuterol from home and 911 was called. Fortunately- the medicine helped. By the time EMS arrived, his vomiting and wheezing had subsided.

This experience had a profound impact on me professionally and personally. I was thankful that his mother had enough foresight to have him carry another albuterol inhaler just in case, even though he was not supposed to have it. The implications for what would have happened to this student are vast. What would have helped me in this case would be a law like House Bill 266 in its original format. Not only would I have had my own albuterol inhaler supply, but I would also have had permission to use it in emergency situations much like the other medications school’s stock.

Unfortunately, the bill has been amended in a way that changes the original intent. I am asking the committee to consider further amending the bill to ensure pediatric asthma specialists are required to be involved in the drafting of the guidelines by Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Department of Education. As a former school nurse and as a Pediatric Nurse

Practitioner, I would also encourage the committee to amend the bill back to the original draft which would allow for the stock albuterol to be used for all children in respiratory distress, and not restricting it to those with diagnosed documented asthma. By broadening the law, it allows much greater access to this lifesaving tool, albuterol which is the standard of care for respiratory distress.

I strongly urge you to amend this bill, which will help to ensure that all children with asthma in Maryland have access to life-saving medication at school in an emergency. Thank you.