



10203 Eaton Place, Suite 100, Fairfax, VA 22030 • 800.878.4403 • AllergyAsthmaNetwork.org

**Testimony**  
**Senate Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment**  
**on**  
**Public and Nonpublic Schools - Bronchodilator Availability and Use - Policy (HB266)**  
**Maryland General Assembly**  
**March 22, 2023**

Allergy & Asthma Network (“Network”), the leading national nonprofit dedicated to ending needless death and suffering due to asthma, allergies and related conditions, supports HB266 *Public and Nonpublic Schools – Bronchodilator Availability and Use* with an amendment. Our suggested amendment for the bill includes having emergency stock albuterol inhalers for ALL students (diagnosed and undiagnosed) experiencing systems of respiratory distress. This ensures any student can be helped who either does not have their own medication available or experiences respiratory distress for the first time.

In 2021, Allergy & Asthma Network joined with the American Thoracic Society, American Lung Association and the National Association of School Nurses and developed an official policy statement, [\*Ensuring Access to Albuterol in Schools: From Policy to Implementation\*](#) that provides policy recommendations and outlines steps for passing and implementing stock albuterol laws in states. While Allergy & Asthma Network agrees with the overall intent of HB266, we are concerned that the version being considered in this Senate Committee limits access to quick-relief medication by imposing restrictions that are not aligned with national best practice recommendations.

Respiratory distress can strike at any time, bringing difficulty breathing, coughing, wheezing, and chest tightness. These episodes cause anxiety, interfere with daily activities, may require Emergency Medical Services or hospitalization, and can be fatal. Quick-relief medication (albuterol) is safe, effective, inexpensive, and may rapidly bring relief.

With more than 26 million Americans living with asthma, including six million children, asthma remains one of the most serious chronic diseases. Asthma is the number one reason that children and youth are absent from school. Approximately 4,145 Americans die each year from asthma and this chronic condition costs the U.S. healthcare system \$80 billion annually in direct healthcare expenditures (emergency department visits and hospitalizations) and indirect costs from lost productivity (missed school days and work days).

When the [\*Asthmatic Schoolchildren’s Treatment and Health Management Act\*](#) was signed into law in 2004, it led to legislation in all 50 states ensuring schoolchildren with asthma had the right to self-carry and administer their quick-relief bronchodilator inhaler at school. There is a movement in states across the country to pass laws or guidelines that standardize asthma management plans in schools and permit schools to stock emergency supplies of albuterol inhalers with a prescription and administer to a student believed to be in respiratory distress. Currently 17 states (Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Virginia) have laws or guidelines in place and legislation is pending in Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration of Allergy & Asthma Network’s comment and proposed amendment. We are hopeful Maryland continues the great work to support the health and academic success for ALL students.