



Testimony
House Committee on Ways and Means
on
Public and Nonpublic Schools - Auto-Injectable Epinephrine and Bronchodilators - Use,
Availability, Training, and Policies (HB86/SB180)
Maryland General Assembly
January 23, 2024

Allergy & Asthma Network, the leading national nonprofit dedicated to ending needless death and suffering due to asthma, allergies and related conditions, **supports the Public and Nonpublic Schools - Auto-Injectable Epinephrine and Bronchodilators - Use, Availability, Training, and Policies bill (HB86/SB180)**. This legislation authorizes schools in the state of Maryland to purchase, acquire, and possess albuterol inhalers and disposable spacers for use by a trained employee or agent in an emergency for a student experiencing symptoms of respiratory distress. This legislation will help any student who either does not have their own medication available or experiences respiratory distress for the first time.

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).

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that schools develop and maintain comprehensive management plans to support children with lower airway disorders, such as asthma, and help control their disorders while in school. Most schools, unfortunately, do not maintain such plans and are ill-prepared for emergencies. This type of preparation and management in schools will not only improve a child's health, but also ensure students are able to focus on learning while in school.

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 [18 states](#) (e.g., Arizona, Arkansas, California, 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.**

At the federal level, the [School-Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act](#) became law in January 2021 to encourage more schools around the country to put comprehensive asthma and allergy management programs in place by increasing federal grant preferences to states. The grant incentive comes by way of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ("CDC") National Asthma Control Program ("NACP") which supports efforts in the states to track asthma prevalence, promote asthma control and prevention and build capacity in state and local health programs. Currently [25 states including the City of Houston, TX and Puerto Rico](#) are funded. Together with other national asthma stakeholders, Allergy & Asthma Network continues to advocate for increased funding to expand NACP to other U.S. states and territories. If HB86/SB180 becomes law, the state of Maryland will have a greater opportunity for funding in future NACP grant rounds.

In closing, Allergy & Asthma Network commends Maryland Delegate Regina Boyce for her continued efforts on this important. We appreciate your consideration and hope this legislation becomes law. Thank you.