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Written Testimony: HB0086

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The Honorable Chairperson Atterbeary

Ways and Means Committee

Maryland House

Honorable Congressperson Atterbeary and Committee members:

I am writing today to express support for HB0086. This bill allows Maryland schools to improve the safety of those who experience respiratory distress at school by improving access to potentially lifesaving bronchodilators.

As a pediatric pulmonologist who specializes in asthma care and high-risk asthma. Previous legislation in Texas was prohibitive and made emergency access to life saving interventions for respiratory distress in schools more restrictive and challenging.

I was able to see the effects of lack of access to life saving bronchodilators in schools had on children and this lead to a committee to improve access to bronchodilators for children with respiratory distress in Texas schools. With a large coalition of diverse stakeholders from all over our very large state, we were able to support the passage of legislation that provides improved access to unassigned bronchodilators to children in schools. Our stakeholders included school nurses, pediatricians, pediatric pulmonologists, respiratory therapists and advocacy leaders. We met with national experts on unassigned bronchodilators some of whom have spoken or will speak to the Maryland legislature in addition to state medical advocacy groups to hear the concerns of the citizens of Texas. Stakeholders in Maryland have similarly approached stakeholders and experts in this field who agree with national guidelines and the strong need for improved legislation.

Texas currently has successful models of stock bronchodilators supported by data. Most notably Asthma 411 which tracks data for unassigned bronchodilator use in schools noted that 80-85% of students were able to return to class following administration and NO reported adverse outcomes were noted with institution of the program.

I would strongly support the adoption of HB0086 to:

- ***improve the safety of students, faculty, and staff at school and during school events;***
- ***reduce cost and educational disruption of unnecessary EMS calls;***
- ***keeps kids in school, increasing student attendance and readiness to learn;***
- ***reduces work absences among parents.***

Please let me know if there is any information that I might provide that would be of assistance.

With thanks,

Folashade Afolabi, MD
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