

HB 5667
March 3, 2008

Chairman Handley, Chairman Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5667.

Good Morning Ladies and Gentleman. My name is Sheri Amechi and I live in Meriden with my husband Chuma and our two sons, one of which you just heard from. As Sedrick, mentioned, he was diagnosed with diabetes right at the end of first grade.

By third grade, his endocrinologist suggested putting him on an insulin pump for tighter blood glucose control. The school nurse at that time was a lifesaver. Since Sedrick would be her first student going on a pump she decided to attend his pump training session. She learned Sedrick's pump inside and out. I knew he would be in safe hands. Sedrick visited her four times a day to check his number and take meal boluses and correction boluses if needed. She however was the only person in that school who knew how to operate the pump. Whenever she was out, I was guaranteed to have a phone call at work from a substitute nurse with questions, as she was not experienced with the pump. Had another person in the school been trained in how to operate the pump, I feel that the substitute nurses would have someone else to rely on when dealing with Sedrick.

In Middle School, there were two nurses. My husband and I, provided training to the nurses and they too learned how to operate our son's pump. They would be the only two people in the school that knew this information. Now in middle School, time missed from class caused some issues. Our son frequently missed the homework assignments given in the last few minutes of class. His classes were located a distance from the nurse so time had to be allowed for him to travel to and from the nurse and what ever time was needed while in the office. If the nurses were busy, this trip could take up to 20 or 25 minutes. That's a lot of time for a middle schooler to miss from class. Had a teacher on his team been instructed on the pumps operation, all this missed time could have been avoided.

Sedrick was so embarrassed when he found out that on all school field trips, one of his nurses would have to be his chaperone. I know it was for his safety but had one of his teachers been taught, this could have all been avoided. Less money would have been spent, since with the nurse out of the school, another nurse had to replace her for the day.

Now that he is in High School, things are a bit different. He is much more independent and is assuming responsibility for the operation of his pump. He checks his blood glucose level in his classes and adjusts the pump accordingly. My main concern is that once again, the nurse is the only person who knows how to operate his pump. This is a bit scary for me since in his school he is in a

completely different building when he is in his shop week. As a parent, I would feel more comfortable if a staff member in the other building knew how his pump operates just in case a situation arises and the nurse is not readily available. I also feel that gym teachers and sports coaches should also be trained in the usage of the pump.

I ask that you consider HB 5667, as for the safety of not only my son but of other students with insulin pumps is what is at stake here. Someone else other than the school nurse needs to be trained on the insulin pumps operation.

Thank you,