

Testimony of

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Raised Bill No. 369

AN ACT CONCERNING AUTHORIZATION FOR THE USE OF FEEDING TUBES AND ANTIPILEPTIC MEDICATION IN SCHOOL SETTING

Members of the Public Health Committee:

As a school nurse for sixteen years of experience, this testimony is submitted in opposition to Raised Bill 369.

Diastat gel is one of several antiepileptic medications given in the school setting. It is a controlled substance medication which means it can be potentially abuse. School nurses are required by law to have the primary care providers give written orders and the authorization of a parent or guardian for the each individual child (Connecticut State Law [10-212a-2]). More importantly, note that this medication can be easily be confused with diazotize which one of the main reason to recognize quickly if this error were to occur. When diastat gel is administered the child must be closely monitored for sign and symptoms of ataxia and over-sedation. There are several side effects which include but not limited to:

- CNS – severe drowsiness
- CV – hypotension, bradycardia
- Respiratory – difficulty breathing which is life threatening

Diastat also, has drugs interactions which may increase the central nervous system and cause the risk of toxicity. Diastat gel is administrated rectally because the individual having the seizure is unable to swallow or is at risk to choke (Diastat AcuDial). When reading about the medication is it important to note that the company clearly indicates “other medication may require administration by a medical professional” (Diastat AcuDial).

Thus far the ordered of diastat which I have received usually indicate to administrate the gel if the seizure last more than three to five minutes and give a second dose if it last more than 10 minutes. The next step is to have the child transported to the nearest emergency room. This alone is indicating that after the medication is given the child needs further care by a medical provider. “Medication administration is an essential component of quality of care, and nurses play a central role in assuring high-quality training of child care provider” (Heschel, Crowley, and Cohen; 2005). When I think of child care provider this would include the parent or legal guardian in providing them with education of the side effects and when to communicate with the primary care provider. Furthermore, keeping close communication and collaboration with the providers with any changes of condition. After reading the Department of Public Health [Public Health Code] Administration of Medication by School Personnel, I have noted several important factors:

- (NEW) Section-212a-9

“If approved by the local or regional board of education, paraprofessional, in the absence of a school nurse, may only administer medications to a specific student in order to protect that student from harm or death due to a medically diagnosed allergic condition according to the following:

(d) only medication necessary for prompt treatment of an allergic reaction, including but not limited to, to a cartridge injector...”

The State of Connecticut **Regulation** of State of Connecticut of Education concerning medication by school personal indicates cartridge injector but does not clearly defined the term. In doing some research "Cartridge injector" means an automatic prefilled cartridge injector or similar automatic injectable equipment used to deliver epinephrine in a standard dose for emergency first aid response to allergic reactions” This does not include the diastat gel.

Some paraprofessionals employed by the Hartford Board of Education have received the Basic Life Support (BLS) First Aid Training which includes a section of asthma inhaler and epi-pen but no other drugs are included.

A child who is having a seizure in the school setting should always be monitored for any change in the seizure activity. The school nurses are trained to make critical judgments in making the correct choices of administrating the medications diastat gel. It is critical that the nurse in the school is the person delegated to make such critical decision for the safety of the child.

Diastat gel is not a type of regimen that should be use daily to prevent seizure. The drug is only for increased of seizure episodes and use for short term (Retrieved from Rx drug information). Therefore, it is critical that the nurse is the person delegated to make the critical decision in administrating the diastat gel for the child in emergency need.

Base on the information provided is it safe for “other people” or “qualified person” to administer diastat gel to a child who need the critical judgment of a nurse with the correct scope of education and practice. Can you clearly define the “other people” in charge to make such decisions? Principal, teachers, paraprofessional, physical education instructors, bus driver, lunch staff or secretary. Or the nurse who has the tool, education and the State of Connecticut license to practice the scope of nursing which include the nursing process.

As far as tube feeding for a child with Glycogen Storage Disease (GSD), I agreed with Mr. G. A. Coleman, Acting Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE) that it should be opposes. Again, this requires the training of a professional nurse who has the education and license to provide the best, safest and critical level of care for the child. The Hartford Board of Education has hired licensed practical nurses (LPN) to provide 1:1 care to children with special needs like GSD. This should be the standard of practice with all the schools in the State of Connecticut. In Hartford every school has a nurse in my school alone I had three LPN and myself a RN to care for multi-complex children. An unlicensed personal does not have the adequate training or knowledge to perform this type of direct care. The use of an unlicensed person to provide this type of care is not beneficial for the child but on the contrary it places the child at risk for bodily harm. The untrained person has not been trained to practice the nursing

process to assess nutrition status changes or even to evaluate the complexities which are associated with a tube feed procedure.

Similar to diastat gel a tube feeding requires a primary care provider order. Orders from a primary care provider must be followed by a license nurse in accordance with the Nurse Practice Act of Connecticut.

I have had many children that require tube feeding and many of these students almost always have additional complex conditions. It is important to have a trained nurse who has the knowledge to care for a child with any complexity.