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***RB 5521 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE AND ADMINISTRATION OF
EPINEPHRINE AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION***

Committee on Education

Thank you to Senator Andrea Stillman and Representative Fleischmann and members of the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on RB 5521 An Act Concerning the Storage and Administration of Epinephrine at Public Schools and Public Institutions of Higher Education.

I have been a school nurse and school nurse supervisor since 1985. Over my 29 years in school health, I have seen health care in our schools evolve.

Assessment of an emergency situation such as anaphylaxis requires knowledge and the ability to determine the cause of symptoms before interventions are made. Every health issue is individual specific and dependent on the needs of the individual and the situation. Signs of anaphylaxis may be subtle and lack recognizable symptoms. School nurses have the expertise to determine who, what, when, and how the health care of children can become the responsibility of a non-medical person.

Training for staff must be addressed in legislation for the safety and welfare of all involved. Training for persons making medical decisions must be defined. Districts must understand their responsibility and be accountable to insure that appropriate training is provided.

This bill, seemingly well intended, should be delayed until the School Nurse Advisory Council, created by Public Act No. 13-187 *An Act Concerning a School Nurse Advisory Council and An Advisory Council on Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorder Associated with Streptococcal Infections*, meets as scheduled during 2014. The Council will take that time to develop protocols for administration of epinephrine and other emergency medications.

Recommendations by the Council will be forthcoming in 2015. I urge you to delay passage of this legislation while the Council addresses the issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Resources Regarding Assessment of Anaphylaxis

World Allergy Organization Guidelines for the Assessment and Management of Anaphylaxis

<http://www.waojournal.org/content/pdf/1939-4551-4-2-13.pdf>

“Anaphylaxis can sometimes be difficult to diagnose. Individuals with concomitant impaired vision or hearing, neurologic disease, psychiatric illness, such as depression, substance abuse, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or cognitive disorders, might have diminished awareness of anaphylaxis triggers and symptoms.

At any age, concurrent use of... medications such as sedatives, hypnotics, antidepressants, and first generation sedating antihistamines can interfere with recognition of anaphylaxis triggers and symptoms and with the ability to describe symptoms. In patients with concomitant medical conditions, for example, asthma, chronic obstructive, pulmonary disease, or congestive heart failure, symptoms and signs of these diseases can also cause confusion in the diagnosis of anaphylaxis.”

National Institute for Health Care and Excellence

Anaphylaxis: assessment to confirm an anaphylactic episode and the decision to refer after emergency treatment for a suspected anaphylactic episode

<http://publications.nice.org.uk/anaphylaxis-assessment-to-confirm-an-anaphylactic-episode-and-the-decision-to-refer-after-emergency-cg134>

“After an acute anaphylactic reaction, it is believed that many people do not receive optimal management of their condition. One reason for this is healthcare professionals' lack of understanding when making a diagnosis, for example failing to differentiate anaphylaxis from less severe histamine-releasing reactions or from other conditions that mimic some or all of its clinical features. “

Johns Hopkins Nursing

Acute Hypersensitivity Reactions: What Nurses Need to Know

<http://magazine.nursing.jhu.edu/2011/04/acute-hypersensitivity-reactions-what-nurses-need-to-know/comment-page-1/>

“The most extreme form of Hypersensitivity Reaction is **anaphylaxis**..., serious reactions that require astute **nursing assessment** and critical thinking skills.