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MADIGAN STATEMENT ON FEDERAL 'EPIPEN' PROPOSAL

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded U.S. Sens. Dick Durbin and Mark Kirk on their push for federal legislation to allow schools across the country to follow Illinois' lead in protecting children with severe allergies.

"Growing numbers of children suffer from life-threatening food allergies," Attorney General Madigan said. "In Illinois, we were able to eliminate bureaucratic barriers that previously prevented schools from acting when a child could be suffering from a severe allergic reaction but whose medical records didn't reflect an allergy diagnosis. I applaud Senators Durbin and Kirk for making the push to provide schools nationwide with this common sense safety measure to help prevent fatal allergic reactions."

Madigan worked with state Sen. Jeffrey Schoenberg and Rep. Chris Nybo on House Bill 3294 to allow school nurses in public and private schools to administer epinephrine auto-injectors, or "EpiPens," to students who go into anaphylactic shock, a life-threatening allergic reaction, regardless of whether their medical plan on file indicates an allergy diagnosis. The law also allows schools to keep EpiPens on hand for students who are authorized to self-administer the dosage, and for students whose medical plans authorize any school personnel to administer the EpiPen.

The law addresses a growing concern in Illinois schools. Studies show that not only are food allergies on the rise among children, but, according to the Journal of Pediatrics, one in four cases of childhood anaphylaxis occur in children who were not previously diagnosed with a food or other severe allergy. The Journal also found that 25 percent of first reactions among children allergic to peanuts or tree nuts occurred while they were in a school setting.

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