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MADIGAN URGES MORE ACCESS TO EPIPENS IN ILLINOIS CLASSROOMS TO TREAT DEADLY ALLERGIC REACTIONS

***Attorney General Releases Toolkit to Educate Medical Practitioners,
Schools on Illinois' Emergency Epinephrine Act***

Chicago — As the start of a new school year approaches, Attorney General Lisa Madigan today joined with doctors and advocates to increase access to EpiPens in Illinois schools to better protect a growing number of children suffering from deadly food allergies.

Madigan, speaking at Chicago's Lurie Children's Hospital, released her Physician's Toolkit that will educate medical practitioners and schools on Illinois' Emergency Epinephrine Act, which increases public and private schools' access to Epinephrine Auto-Injectors, or EpiPens, for students with food allergies.

Under the Act, school nurses can now administer EpiPens on students who go into anaphylactic shock, a life-threatening allergic reaction – regardless of what their medical records show. The Act also allows any authorized school personnel to administer an EpiPen on a student who has their own, personal prescription for an EpiPen. In order for schools to obtain EpiPens, the Act allows physicians to write prescriptions in the name of a school district, instead of a single patient.

While many school districts, including the Chicago Public Schools system, have stocked EpiPens in schools under the law, Madigan said many more schools have yet to take advantage of the opportunity. Madigan said her toolkit is designed to be an all-encompassing resource for doctors to learn about the law and fulfill a school's request for EpiPens.

"As we enter into a new school year, we want to encourage physicians to partner with local schools to ensure EpiPens are in place for emergencies," Madigan said. "This toolkit contains everything a physician will need to fulfill a request by a school for a prescription for EpiPens."

Madigan was joined today by hospital CEO Patrick Magoon, Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Dr. Melanie Makhija, attending physician in the Allergy and Immunology Division at Lurie Children's, Dr. Ruchi Gupta, director of the Center for Maternal and Child Health Institute for Healthcare Studies at the Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine and Clinical Attending Physician at Lurie Children's Hospital, and Dr. Stephanie Whyte, chief health officer for Chicago Public Schools.

Also attending were representatives of the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Association of School Nurses, the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians and the Food Allergy Initiative, which worked to help pass the Emergency Epinephrine Act, and MOCHA, or Mothers of Children Having Allergies.

Madigan said the Emergency Epinephrine Act was prompted by an increasing number of serious food allergies diagnosed among children. Likewise, according to the Journal of Pediatrics, one in four cases of life-threatening childhood anaphylaxis occurs 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.

Madigan's office will be distributing the toolkit to schools, physicians and advocates throughout Illinois. To obtain an electronic copy, please visit <http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/children/index.html>.

