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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: LAWMAKERS PASS BILL TO EXPAND ACCESS TO EMERGENCY EPINEPHRINE IN ILLINOIS SCHOOLS

House Bill 5892 Sent to Governor to Better Protect Children from Deadly Allergic Reactions

Springfield — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that Senate lawmakers voted to expand access to emergency epinephrine in Illinois schools to protect children from deadly allergic reactions.

Senate members voted 56-0 today to send House Bill 5892 to the governor to increase access to emergency epinephrine under the Illinois Emergency Epinephrine Act, which was originally drafted by Madigan's office. Implemented in 2011, the current law allows school nurses to administer emergency epinephrine auto-injectors to students without known allergies who appear to be in anaphylactic shock. The Act also allows schools to keep emergency epinephrine auto-injectors for students who are authorized to self-administer the dosage during a reaction, and it allows for any school personnel to administer the auto-injector for students who have a medical plan in place.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Andy Manar, would expand the law by allowing any trained school employee or volunteer to administer an epinephrine auto-injector for any person with an unknown allergy believed to be in anaphylactic shock. This change would greatly increase access to emergency epinephrine in the many Illinois schools without school nurses on staff. The expansion is critical because studies show 25 percent of first-time allergic reactions among children occur at school.

"Increasing access to emergency epinephrine in schools is a simple yet critical safety measure we need to take to address the growing number of children living with potentially life-threatening food allergies," Madigan said.

Currently, 37 states allow trained personnel, in addition to school nurses, to administer an emergency epinephrine auto-injector for a student with an unknown allergy. In Virginia, which is among those 37 states, 448 emergency epinephrine auto-injectors were administered during the 2012-2013 school year. Of those incidents, 75 percent involved individuals who had no previously known allergy.

"More and more children are being diagnosed with food allergies, with peanuts, eggs, milk, soy, and wheat as the most common culprits," said Sen. Manar. "Ensuring timely access to this life-saving medication can mean the difference between life and death for a child."

The bill would extend liability protection to advanced practice nurses and physician assistants who provide standing protocols and prescriptions for emergency epinephrine, further enabling schools to obtain prescriptions to keep auto-injectors on hand in the event a person suffers an allergic reaction. The bill also requires schools to report every administration of emergency epinephrine to the Illinois State Board of Education to allow educators and medical professionals to better plan for emergencies.

Rep. Michelle Mussman sponsored the bill in the House.

"I am very proud to be working with the Attorney General's office and all concerned parties to clarify and improve the Emergency Epinephrine Act. Food allergies are on the rise and it is vital that children and adults in our school buildings have timely access to this life-saving medication," said Rep. Mussman.



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