
Education Committee

HB 1608

Brief Description: Expanding access to anaphylaxis medications in schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Bronoske, Simmons, Duerr, Ramel, Wylie, Paul, Jacobsen, Macri, Kloba, Leavitt and Reed.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Secretary of Health or the Secretary's designee to issue a statewide standing order prescribing epinephrine and epinephrine autoinjectors to any school district or school for use by a school nurse or other designated trained school personnel.
- Permits school districts and private schools to maintain a supply of epinephrine and epinephrine autoinjectors (rather than only epinephrine autoinjectors).
- Includes additional changes related to permitting the use of both epinephrine and epinephrine autoinjectors in schools and sanctioned excursions.

Hearing Date: 1/11/24

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Anaphylaxis Guidelines for Students.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) adopted guidelines for the care of students with anaphylaxis, a severe and life-threatening, systemic allergic reaction requiring immediate medical treatment and follow-up care. The guidelines, which were created in 2009 and revised in 2021, indicate that food is the leading cause of anaphylaxis in children. The

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guidelines indicate also that deaths have occurred in schools because of delays in recognizing and responding to symptoms with immediate treatment and further medical interventions.

Epinephrine and Requirements for Schools.

Epinephrine, which can be administered intramuscularly in a fixed dose through an autoinjector, is used for the first-aid treatment of anaphylaxis. The American Academy of Pediatrics indicates that prompt prehospital epinephrine injection is associated with a lower risk of hospitalization and fatality.

A qualified and licensed health professional may prescribe epinephrine autoinjectors (autoinjectors) in the name of the school or district for use when necessary. The prescriptions must be accompanied by a standing order for the administration of school-supplied, undesignated autoinjectors for potentially life-threatening allergic reactions.

School districts and private schools may maintain a supply of autoinjectors based on the number of students enrolled in the school. Autoinjectors may be obtained from donation sources but must be accompanied by a prescription.

The requirements and protocols governing responses to anaphylactic reactions of students differ depending on whether the student has a prescription for an autoinjector on file, but in either case the school nurse may utilize the school or district supply of autoinjectors to respond to the reaction.

Autoinjectors may be used on school property, including the school building, playground, and school bus, and during field trips or sanctioned excursions away from school property. The school nurse or designated, trained school personnel may carry an appropriate supply of school-owned autoinjectors on field trips or excursions.

Secretary of Health.

The Secretary of Health (Secretary) is the director of the Department of Health and has various public health and vital statistics duties prescribed in law, including enforcing public health laws, investigating outbreaks and epidemics of disease, taking measures to promote public health, and licensing health care providers and facilities. The Secretary or the Secretary's designee also issues standing orders (formal written instructions for specific areas or statewide) related to public health, with recent examples pertaining to administering COVID-19 vaccinations and prescribing opioid overdose reversal medications.

Summary of Bill:

The Secretary of Health (Secretary) or the Secretary's designee must issue a statewide standing order prescribing epinephrine and epinephrine autoinjectors (autoinjectors) to any school district or school for use by a school nurse or other designated trained school personnel for any student or individual experiencing anaphylaxis on school property, a school bus, a field trip, or designated school activity.

School districts and private schools are authorized to maintain a supply of epinephrine and autoinjectors (rather than only autoinjectors). Requirements governing the use of autoinjectors for students are modified to permit the use of both epinephrine and autoinjectors in schools and sanctioned excursions.

Provisions directing the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to review anaphylaxis policy guidelines and make related recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2013, are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.