



November 30, 2021

The Honorable Pamela Hornberger
Chair, Education Committee
Room 521, House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Chair Hornberger and Members of the Education Committee:

The Epilepsy Foundation and Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan strongly supports HB 4970. This bill supports a critical priority for the Epilepsy Foundation and the epilepsy community by ensuring safety and continuity of care in the event of a seizure at school.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the at least 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. Our local affiliate, Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, provides services and advocates on behalf of the 108,900 Michiganders, including 13,600 children and teenagers living with epilepsy and seizures in the state. Together, we foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services.

Epilepsy is a medical condition characterized by seizures, which are sudden surges of electrical activity in the brain, that affects a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy, and approximately 1 in 10 people will experience a seizure, at some point in their lifetime. A seizure can happen to any person, in any place, at any time, and it is vital that school personnel are prepared to respond in this event appropriately and effectively. Compared to students with other health concerns, one Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study showed that students aged 6-17 years living with epilepsy were more likely to miss 11 or more days of school in the past year.¹ For these students, proper seizure first aid and continuity of care while they are at school is crucial to ensuring they can reach their full potential with as minimal disruption to their learning environment as possible.

Through this bill, school personnel will be required to take a seizure recognition and first aid course on a biennial basis, which will ensure they are not only prepared, but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to a student experiencing a seizure. The legislation would also support the use of a Seizure Action Plan to further ensure that school personnel have access to information that may be specific or unique to that student. And, importantly, the legislation safeguards physician-directed care in the school setting, allowing students to access necessary and potentially life-saving medication. Taken together, the provisions in the

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017, May 09). Healthy Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/epilepsy.htm>



bill represent important protections that ensure that students living with epilepsy and seizures are safe while attending school or a school-related function.

The Epilepsy Foundation and Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan are proud to support HB 4970 to help ensure children living with epilepsy and seizures are safe and experience continuity of care while at school. Together, we can make sure Michigan is at the forefront of this important nationwide initiative by joining 12 additional states that have passed these critical protections for students living with epilepsy and seizures. Please feel free to contact Brianna Romines, President, Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan at bromines@epilepsymichigan.org with any questions or follow-up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brianna Romines".

*Brianna Romines
President
Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Thrall".

*Laura Thrall
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation*