From: Neelon, Kathleen
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2016 10:01 AM
To: Navarrete, Leslie
Subject: Food Allergy Comments

First I would like to stress that I don't think we need to implement one more directive legislatively regarding food allergies. We have an excellent document provided by SDE and if followed you can keep all students with food allergies as safe a possible. We can't keep anyone 100% safe from anything but if we follow the plan the students can be safe. We implemented our District Plan in 2006 based on the SDE document and have been extremely successful with keeping students safe with life-threatening food allergies. We educate all staff every school year with great success. We have only had 1-3 incidents at the most per year which we report to the State every year. All incidents were high school students who ate something and new they should not have eaten the food or the student had an new unknown allergen. Last year out of over 230 students with LTFA none needed to receive their EpiPen. Before we go changing anything where is the recent data to show that students who need an EpiPen are not getting them when needed. In addition, we have never had to administer an EpiPen on a bus. If legislation requires training bus drivers the cost of training can't be pushed onto the school nor should the training have to be done by the schools. It would be another unfunded mandate of which I would not agree. Again, where is the data to support the need for this training.

Regarding the legislation that a parent has right to opt-out of the school providing emergency Epi to children by trained qualified staff is an Act that clearly has not been thought through. The legislation requires schools to train qualified staff to treat a student for a life-threatening condition and then you allow the parent to opt-out of allowing the trained staff not to administer life-saving medication…….not sure what the logic is in this requirement.

Most parents have no idea of what we are explaining to them when informed of this option. Unfortunately, in our district we had hundreds of parents opting out this year and the school nurses had to call each one and explain what they were opting out of and all but a few reversed their decision. If the law wants us to train qualified staff to treat a suspected life- threatening condition and a parent opts out are we not supposed to treat their child if they present with life threatening symptoms? This opt out option then still puts some children at risk for not being treated when needed for a suspected life-threatening allergy. You really can't have it both ways. You are asking an unlicensed person (I have a problem with this in itself) in a emergent situation where they have to react quickly to review a list of students whose parents don't want their child to receive life- saving medication and now what do they do beside call 911…….as I have said this is not good practice and all the ramifications have not been thought through. The intervention should be that if they are trained to respond they should be allowed to respond to all students.

Thank you,

Kathy Neelon, MS, BSN
Nurse Coordinator
Wallingford, CT 06492