

Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation To Protect Children With Severe Allergies

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SPRINGFIELD — Governor JB Pritzker today signed legislation that establishes the Childhood Anaphylactic Policy, creating added safety measures for students with life-threatening allergies. House Bill 102 provides guidance to school districts and daycares regarding anaphylactic reactions, furthering the administration's commitment to making Illinois' educational systems safe and inclusive for all students.

“I’m glad that the Childhood Anaphylactic Policy will not only provide comfort to parents of children with severe allergies, but it will better equip daycares and K-12 schools with the expertise to help these kids,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “As a parent myself, I’m intent upon making Illinois the best state in the nation to raise a young family. Thanks to this bill, we’re locking in another piece of the puzzle today.”

In an effort to better help schools protect all students, House Bill 102 requires the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to establish anaphylaxis policies and procedures for school districts and daycare settings.

To relay the most accurate information, IDPH will update the policies every three years in consultation with specialists. The information will be displayed online on the IDPH website, as well as provided to each school district, charter school and day care center within six months after effective date of becoming law. To continue to help educate caregivers about the severity of food allergies and anaphylaxis, schools and daycare centers must communicate the policies annually to parents.

“Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can include a wide range of symptoms and can start quickly causing a life-threatening emergency,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Allergic reactions can be unpredictable as to when they occur, the type of symptoms, and the severity of symptoms. Because anaphylaxis can occur at any age, including children, it is important for teachers and staff in schools and day cares to know the signs of an allergic reaction and be prepared to act. IDPH will convene allergy experts and pediatricians to develop a policy to help schools and day cares protect children from severe allergic reactions.”

IDPH will also work with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to establish the most effective policies and procedures.

“As the state superintendent, I take the safety of each and every student personally. Parents and guardians entrust us to keep their children safe when they are at school, whether that be in the classroom, on the playground, or in the cafeteria,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala. “This new law will help give parents peace of mind that there is a plan in place and staff have been properly trained to protect children if they have an allergic reaction while at school.”

“Children of any age can suffer an allergic reaction, and it is important that daycare staff are prepared to handle a medical emergency resulting from anaphylaxis. By requiring every licensed day care facility to have a plan for anaphylactic shock, we are protecting children and providing reassurance to families that their children are being properly

cared for while at a licensed daycare,” said DCFS Director Marc D. Smith. “DCFS currently licenses almost 9,000 daycares throughout the state of Illinois and will require each one to have at least one staff member present at all times who has taken a training course in recognizing and responding to anaphylaxis.”

According to the [Allergy & Asthma Network](#), in the United States one in 12 children have food allergies, yet 25 percent of reactions in school go without a previous diagnosis. HB 102 addresses the need for more clarity in school settings on severe allergic reaction protocols by tightening anaphylaxis training across school levels.

“Children spend most of their day at school and should be able to enjoy the same simple joys of school, safe in the knowledge that we’re ready to protect them in an emergency. That starts with the help of the school community,” said State Senator Julie Morrison (D-Lake Forest). “I appreciate Governor Pritzker for signing this measure that will ensure schools are well-equipped to help children during a time of increased need.”

“As a parent of a child with food allergies, I know firsthand how nerve-racking it is to send a child off to someone else’s care,” said State Representative Jonathan Carroll (D-Northbrook). “Today I kept my promise to the Sylvera’s family and honored their son’s memory and ensure future episodes won’t happen. I want to thank Senator Morrison and Governor Pritzker for helping me make this possible.”

HB 102 is based on Elijah’s Law, which was passed in New York in 2019. Similar to Elijah’s Law, HB 102 ensures that all children and students are safe, regardless of socioeconomic conditions.

HB 102 is effective July 1, 2021.