



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™*



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

**Department of Pediatrics**  
**Division of Allergy and Immunology**

December 15, 2020

Dear Ohio State Senators,

As a pediatric allergist and Director of the Food Allergy Treatment Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital, I am writing to provide enthusiastic support for the Senate to pass House Bill 231, also known as "The Allison Rose Act". This legislation will positively support prior legislation in Ohio surrounding food allergies in schools, including House Bill 296, which was passed in 2013. House Bill 296 allowed schools to voluntarily procure and stock epinephrine autoinjectors to use for any student or staff member experiencing anaphylaxis.

Food allergies affect up to 1 in 13 children, which averages 1 or 2 children in every classroom, in every school, throughout our state. Someone with a food allergy must strictly avoid their allergens and without precautions, are at risk for experiencing a reaction with every snack or meal. Food allergy reactions range in severity, often causing itching and skin rash, but can also progress very rapidly to cause vomiting, difficulty breathing, or life threatening anaphylaxis. Families who have children with food allergies receive extensive education surrounding food allergen avoidance measures (reading labels, communication with food handlers at restaurants), recognition of symptoms when they occur, indications for using epinephrine, and proper use of each autoinjector device. The development of these important self-management skills requires extensive education, practice, and reinforcement over time. Nuances that impact children of different ages and developmental levels are incredibly important to address as well.

When families send their child with food allergies to school, these parents are often tasked with educating the teachers, nurses, and other school personnel regarding food allergy management. Unfortunately, the prevalence of childhood food allergies has increased dramatically over the past two decades, which makes this even more pressing. In addition, research studies within schools have identified anaphylaxis occurring from accidental ingestion while on school grounds, increased anxiety among children with food allergies, unnecessary exclusion from certain activities, and also bullying from peers and even adults.

The Allison Rose Act will encourage each school to include annual food allergy training for staff and students. By increasing the understanding of food allergy management and reactions, this will foster a more inclusive and safer environment for students with food allergies. In addition, this bill will also create a much needed resource to help schools identify organizations and companies that can assist with their procurement of epinephrine autoinjectors, which can cost hundreds of dollars and require annual renewal

due to expiration dates. As someone who has personally written hundreds of prescriptions to help schools across Ohio obtain free epinephrine autoinjectors, I can attest that additional resources are absolutely needed. Despite passage of the stock epinephrine legislation in 2013, we still lack a centralized resource across Ohio to help schools obtain autoinjectors or track their distribution.

In summary, House Bill 231 will improve the lives of children with food allergies who attend school in Ohio. I have the privilege of helping thousands of families with food allergies navigate their lives on a daily basis. I know their stories and I know their struggles, which often center around sending their child to school. Please strongly consider passing this important legislation to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all school children.

Sincerely,



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