



ERIE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

PAUL A. SIGSWORTH
SHERIFF

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November 29, 2024

The Honorable Senator Theresa Gavarone
Ohio Senate District 2
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Room 138
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Via email: theresagavarone@gmail.com
gavarone@ohiosenate.gov

Senator Gavarone:

Please allow this letter to document my strong support for Senate Bill 234 that you have sponsored. If enacted, this legislation would allow law enforcement officers—with proper training—to optionally, at the discretion of their employing agency, carry and use an epinephrine auto injector to provide for the emergency treatment of an individual experiencing anaphylactic shock due to an allergic reaction.

Current state law as prescribed in Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3728 and Section 3728.01 allows for an individual with proper training and associated with "a location where allergens capable of causing anaphylaxis may be present, including child care centers, colleges and universities, places of employment, restaurants, amusement parks, recreation camps, sports playing fields and arenas, and other similar locations" to administer epinephrine using an auto injector to an individual experiencing a medical emergency related to an allergic reaction. However, even though our personnel frequently respond to calls at such locations, the Erie County Prosecutor has opined that the current statutory language excludes law enforcement officers—and therefore our patrol Deputy Sheriffs—from that definition.

Routinely, our agency's patrol personnel are dispatched to assist our excellent local fire and EMS/paramedic personnel with rescue calls involving medical emergencies. These calls can, and have previously included, incidents involving allergic reactions with severe anaphylaxis. In some of our more rural areas, response time for an ambulance may be several minutes. An individual suffering from a severe anaphylactic reaction may not have the luxury of waiting that amount of time. It is not uncommon for a patrol Deputy Sheriff to be "right around the corner" from a rescue call and the immediate use of an epinephrine auto injector may be exactly what is needed given an anaphylactic reaction situation.



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Senator Gavarone, as we have discussed previously, it is our duty and obligation to the public that we serve to do everything within our abilities as peace officers to preserve human life and to react to and properly treat those experiencing an emergency—medical or otherwise. Our authorization to carry and use an epinephrine auto injector would allow us to do exactly that at an anaphylaxis reaction call, just as we currently carry other first aid supplies to control severe bleeding and to administer CPR, Narcan to treat those experiencing an opiate overdose, and liquid glucose to orally administer when practical to an individual suffering from a diabetic issue.

I do not want anyone to misunderstand—my support for this topic does not mean that I am advocating for law enforcement officers to in any way act in the place of the advanced services that an EMT or Paramedic can provide once they arrive at the scene of an emergency. Our ability to use an epinephrine auto injector—just as we may use the other supplies mentioned—would allow us to preserve life and lessen suffering until the arrival of those fine professionals.

I would like to thank you for listening to me regarding this topic and for sponsoring this legislation. I appreciate your keen interest in this matter and your ongoing and constant support of law enforcement.

Included with my letter are two additional letters of support for your review. The first is authored by Captain W. Dean Gasser of the Margaretta Township Fire Department here in Erie County. Captain Gasser is a long-time paramedic and is also the Chairperson of the Erie County EMS Council, and advisory board for EMS/Paramedic service providers throughout the county. The second is authored by Donald Spaner, M.D., a highly respected, long-tenured emergency physician and the medical director for our area EMS/Paramedic service providers.

Very respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul A. Sigsworth".

Paul A. Sigsworth
Sheriff

Margaretta Township

DIVISION OF FIRE

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Kerry D. Jett, Fire Chief

November 27, 2024

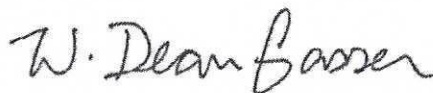
To whom it may concern,

As an almost 25 year veteran Paramedic, I know first hand just how important precious minutes count, when saving a life. Whether we are dealing with a cardiac arrest, stroke victim, or anaphylactic shock, minutes count. The Fire and EMS service nationally is struggling to meet the need of qualified personnel, and as you are all aware, Ohio is no different. Living in a county that is partially covered by volunteer Fire and EMS departments, we rely heavily on local Police and Sheriff's Departments to sometimes initiate life saving skills, including CPR and First Aid.

I have recently been made aware of SB 234, introduced by Sen. Theresa Gavarone. I am writing in support of this bill. A severe anaphylactic reaction can cause death within minutes, if not treated properly. By allowing our law enforcement officers to carry life saving epi-pens, can mean the difference between life and death.

Please join me in support of SB 234, and placing this life saving drug in the hands of our law enforcement partners.

Respectfully,



W. Dean Gasser
Captain / Paramedic
Chairman, Erie County EMS Council



11/28/2024

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter to give my highest support to allow epi-pens to be carried by our first responders, to include police officers. I understand that there is a Bill before the state to consider this process. We at University Hospitals would support the appropriate education for our law enforcement officers. I have educated our EMTs and Paramedics for over 30 years regarding the critical need to have epinephrine available as soon as humanly possible in the event of anaphylaxis. The patients who undergo anaphylaxis so severe that they could die, have these reactions extremely rapidly. The fact is, if they make it to the emergency department, it usually is not a reaction that will kill them. The ones that die, perish immediately. There only hope of survival is extremely rapid administration of intramuscular epinephrine. The kits we are suggesting are already prescribed to parents and patients. They are spring loaded and self-administering. We would go over the safe indications and use of these devices. We have already trained law enforcement in the administration of Narcan for our overdose patients. This has saved countless lives as law enforcement is frequently the first providers on scene, especially in remote areas. This would allow rapid life saving auto administration of epinephrine to rapidly critically ill allergic reactions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Donald Spaner MD
CMO UH EMS Institute.
Donald.spaner@uhhospitals.org**