



Seizure Awareness and Preparedness Act

The Need for the Legislation

Seizures are spontaneous surges in uncoordinated electrical activity in the brain, that affect body movement or function, sensation, behavior or awareness. It is estimated that 1 in 10 Americans will have at least one seizure in their lifetime. Epilepsy is a common neurological condition characterized by recurring seizures and is believed to develop in 1 out of 26 people in their lifetime. There are approximately 456,000 children and teenagers living with active epilepsy in the United States.

In 2020, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed into law the first-of-its-kind in New Jersey “Paul’s Law,” named in honor Paul St. Pierre, a New Jersey teenager with epilepsy. This legislation authorizes the development of individualized health care plans for students with seizure disorders or epilepsy, and it mandates that school personnel are trained in how to care for students with such conditions.¹ These measures protect the nearly 12,000 New Jersey children with epilepsy, allowing them to attend school with the assurance that they will be taken care of. About half of the states in the country have passed similar legislation to mandate or encourage seizure recognition and first aid training of school personnel, as well as other provisions to help ensure students with epilepsy are safe and supported in the school environment. The Seizure Awareness and Preparedness Act would continue this momentum by authorizing funding to help ensure all students nationwide are surrounded by trained and prepared individuals.

Summary

The legislation would create a grant program to support students who have epilepsy or a seizure disorder. These funds can be used to carry out a program in the public elementary schools and secondary schools served by such agency to fund training of school personnel on seizure awareness and preparedness that covers individualized health care plans and individualized emergency health care plans for students who have epilepsy or a seizure disorder.

The grant could be used for:

- Training of school personnel to administer or assist with the administration of seizure medications.
- Training and education of students on seizure awareness and preparedness.
- Recruiting, hiring, and retaining compliance staff who are responsible for ensuring that all training and program requirements related to seizure awareness, preparedness, and management are consistently met.

¹<https://www.nj.gov/education/broadcasts/2021/mar/PaulsLawRequirementsToSupportStudentsWithSeizureDisorders.pdf>