

Manitoba Anaphylaxis Information Network

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW LAW SUPPORTS STUDENTS AT RISK OF ANAPHYLAXIS

Bill 232 - The Public Schools Amendment Act (Anaphylaxis Policy) was passed by the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on October 6, 2008. This new law requires that “Each school board must develop an anaphylaxis policy to meet the needs of pupils who have diagnosed anaphylaxis.” Bill 232 was presented by Erin Selby (MLA - Southdale) as a Private Member’s Bill on May 12. On October 9 it received Royal Assent making Manitoba the second province to have a law to protect students with life-threatening allergies.

Statistics indicate between 5 and 8% of Manitoba children have life-threatening allergies*. This new law is expected to lead to greater consistency throughout all schools in Manitoba to provide for the safety of the estimated 19,000 provincial school-aged children who are at risk of anaphylaxis.

Nancy Boni, chairperson of the Manitoba Anaphylaxis Information Network (MAIN) believes this new Manitoba law will increase understanding of the seriousness of this medical condition. Boni said “All students need to feel safe at school and parents need to feel confident that their children will be taken care of while at school. This law will provide support for parents who are involved with schools in planning for the safety of their children with life-threatening allergies.”

The campaign for the new law was spearheaded by Krista Wiebe, a Winnipeg mother whose son was excluded from a day-care facility because of his allergies. Wiebe says “It is important that we strongly advocate for our children who have allergies and anaphylaxis.”

Boni says “Developing an anaphylaxis plan requires a team approach including the parents, the allergic student, school administrators and staff all who are assigned specific responsibilities. Success of a plan is contingent on support from the whole school community including fellow students and their parents.”

In Ontario, in January 2006, Sabrina’s Law came into effect requiring Ontario school boards to establish and maintain anaphylactic policies. This law was named for Sabrina Shannon, a 13-year-old girl from Pembroke, Ontario who died in 2003 after an anaphylactic reaction to dairy at school.

* *Environmental Health Perspectives*, Volume 111, Number 2, February 2003, “Food Allergy : An Overview” by Rhoda Sheryl Kagan (Divisions of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, Department of Pediatrics, Montreal Children’s Hospital, McGill University Health Centre.)

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