



## School-Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act (H.R. 2468)

### **REQUEST**

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) requests that you **cosponsor the “School-Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act” (H.R. 2468)** which would encourage schools receiving asthma-related grants to have trained personnel and a comprehensive school-based allergies and asthma management program.

### **SUMMARY**

The “School-Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act” (H.R. 2468) would amend the Public Health Service Act to revise the conditions under which the Department of Health and Human Services, in making asthma-related grants, gives preference to a state. A preference is given to states that require elementary and secondary schools to have:

- (1) at least one individual, such as a school nurse or other school staff, trained in the administration of rescue medications for allergies and asthma on the premises during operating hours, and
- (2) an allergies and asthma management program that includes a method to identify students with allergies and asthma, an action plan and support system for each such student.

### **SUPPORT**

The School-Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act is endorsed by the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology; American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology; Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America; Allergy and Asthma Network; and National Association of School Nurses.

### **BACKGROUND**

Over 6 million American children have asthma, a disease that is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism. According to the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, parents report that students miss 14 million days of school every year due to asthma. While asthma poses serious health and educational threats, with proper treatment and care, asthma can be controlled and does not have to negatively impact a student's access to education.

The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services recommend that schools have comprehensive management plans in place to support children with asthma and ensure that their disorders are under control while at school. Unfortunately, most schools do not have such programs in place. An asthma action plan outlines what medications to take, and when and how to increase the doses or add more medication if needed. If a school doesn't have an asthma action plan for a child, there is little they can do for a child suffering an asthma attack. They cannot provide medication, even if they have it, without parental authorization. An asthma action plan, communication with the physician and the ability for a school nurse to administer a rescue inhaler can mean the difference between life and death.

In addition, it is important that schools have a similar action plan for students who have a history of a severe allergy to an environmental exposure (e.g. peanut, insect sting). This follows the same principle as outlined above: affording the school the opportunity to provide life-saving medication (e.g. epinephrine autoinjector) to a student who develops a severe allergic reaction while in school while also providing an

approved management plan including critical contact information for both family members and medical professionals involved in the care of the student.

The AAAAI, in collaboration with other stakeholders, developed [SAMPRO™, the School-based Asthma Management Program](#) and provides a tool-kit at no cost to assist families and schools in maintaining this important health information. SAMPRO™ standardizes recommendations for school-based asthma and provides websites and resources useful for the care of children with asthma in the school setting.

The two most important strategies for preparing schools in the event of an asthma incident are implementing management plans and ensuring school staff members are prepared to assist children experiencing an attack. The “School-Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act” (H.R. 2468) would encourage states to implement these changes so that schools are better equipped to help students with asthma manage their disease. This type of preparation and management in schools not only will improve child health but will also ensure students are able to focus on learning.

#### **CONTACT**

For questions or to cosponsor H.R. 2468, please contact Rachel Snyder with Majority Leader Hoyer (D-MD) at [rachel.snyder@mail.house.gov](mailto:rachel.snyder@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-4131, or John Witherspoon with Rep. Roe, M.D. (R-TN) at [john.witherspoon@mail.house.gov](mailto:john.witherspoon@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-6356.