

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY on HB 2749**  
**BEFORE THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**April 4, 2013**  
**Jami Onchi**

My name is Jami Onchi and I am advocating on behalf of my eight year old daughter, Jayden.

Jayden is anaphylactic to peanuts and tree nuts. If Jayden comes into contact with these products or any product contaminated with these foods, she could die.

We found out Jayden was allergic when she was about 18 months old. Upon her first bite of a peanut butter sandwich, her face swelled. After being rushed to the Emergency room and allergy tested, it was discovered the severity of her allergy. Jayden has since been tested every year and the exposure to these allergens has increased. Even though Jayden has never eaten an actual peanut or tree nut, she was still being exposed. It was then determined Jayden was picking up contamination from foods that were manufactured on the same equipment or in the same facility. Therefore, Jayden was no longer able to eat any foods that stated they were made in the same facility or on shared equipment with peanuts or tree nuts.

Jayden is not only allergic with oral ingestion, she is allergic with topical exposure as well. This was discovered after Jayden had applied a lotion to her hands. After about 30 seconds, Jayden started screaming and her hands appeared as if she had just put them in scolding hot water. After reading the ingredients, it became apparent her reaction was due to an almond oil inside the lotion. Now, we look at all lotions, soaps, and shampoos before Jayden uses them.

After learning my child was peanut and tree nut allergic, I had to understand what this would mean to Jayden and our family. How did our lives need to change in order to make the safest environment for her. I needed to understand more about food allergies.

After hours and hours of research, I understand exactly what it means to be peanut and tree nut allergic. It means, my child could die. As cautious as we are in our home environment, as soon as Jayden gets on the bus for school to the time she gets home, my heart is heavy. Will I get a devastating phone call that Jayden was exposed to a peanut or tree nut and had an anaphylactic reaction? Will Jayden be safe at school today? Will the school staff remember what to do with an epi-pen? Will the epi-pen be administered in time? Will Jayden get off the bus at the end of the day? These are my thoughts each and every day when Jayden leaves our home.

My first concern with the school system was the day Jayden started Kindergarten at Sunnyside Elementary. The day that was supposed to be fun, turned into a nightmare. I filled out all the medicine forms, had her physician sign the paper work, provided two sets of epi-pens and emergency contact information. I introduced myself to her teacher

and explained Jayden's allergies and then attempted to hand over the epi-pens to store in the classroom. I was then informed it was the School District policy to store all medications in the office. My heart sank. As a pharmacist, I know every second counts when epinephrine is needed during an anaphylactic episode and the office was on the other side of the building. This was not going to work. I then spent half the day driving across town multiple times to Jayden's allergist for more and more paperwork. After several trips across town, the allergist finally wrote in black marker across the form "Jayden will die!" It was after this bold notation that the epi-pen was finally stored in the classroom.

Next year we went back to Scouters Mountain Elementary and I was given the same "medications are stored in the office" response. This time I was prepared. In the end, the epi-pen has been in her classroom since she started at the school.

I am passionately advocating for this Bill because of my personal experience and I believe it will help save children's lives. I want to be at ease knowing Jayden and all other kids with food allergies will be safe when they are at school and that a protocol is in place in every district. I want to know that when a substitute teacher comes into Jayden's class, they are epi-pen trained as well as the bus driver who drives her to and from school. I want to know that if Jayden is exposed and having an allergic reaction, her teacher will be able to administer an epi-pen because they have been trained.

With the increasing number of children who have food allergies, it is important for school staff to be trained on how to identify allergic reactions, have a protocol in place and a plan of action to keep our kids safe. There must be an appropriate number of school staff trained per set ratio of children. Develop protocols and procedures, work with parents, students and staff to be prepared. Reach out to food allergic children in the school. Develop a plan and procedure they can use to get the attention of a teacher or another child if they need help.

Parents will still be responsible for informing schools about the child's allergy, providing epi-pens and filling out the necessary paperwork. It will be the School District responsibility to insure policies are in place within the schools.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jami Onchi, Rph

These are some links I came across. They have links about food allergies, anaphylaxis sign and symptoms, school guidelines, action plans, training tools, true stories from other families and a link to a 7 year old girl who died last year at school after exposed to peanuts.

## **Statistics**

<http://www.foodallergy.org/facts-and-stats>

## **Personal stories/child death**

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/04/health/virginia-allergy-death>

<http://www.foodallergy.org/true-stories/mary>

## **States who have epi-pen laws and guidelines/how to use an epi-pen**

<http://www.allergyhome.org/schools/map/>

## **Training tools/guidelines/policies/action plans/check lists**

[http://allergyready.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Back\\_to\\_school\\_with\\_Allergy\\_Ready.pdf](http://allergyready.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Back_to_school_with_Allergy_Ready.pdf)

[http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/food\\_allergy\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/food_allergy_guidelines.pdf)

[http://allergyready.com/courses/ANAPH-010/data/downloads/signs\\_and\\_symptoms\\_of\\_anaphylaxis.pdf](http://allergyready.com/courses/ANAPH-010/data/downloads/signs_and_symptoms_of_anaphylaxis.pdf)

[http://allergyready.com/courses/ANAPH-010/data/downloads/school\\_guidelines.pdf](http://allergyready.com/courses/ANAPH-010/data/downloads/school_guidelines.pdf)

[http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/GetTrained\\_tools\\_presentation\\_handouts.pdf](http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/GetTrained_tools_presentation_handouts.pdf)

<http://www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=142>

[http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/GetTrained\\_tools\\_presentation\\_script.pdf](http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/GetTrained_tools_presentation_script.pdf)

[http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/GetTrained\\_tools\\_handout.pdf](http://www.nasn.org/portals/0/resources/GetTrained_tools_handout.pdf)

[http://www.neahin.org/assets/pdfs/foodallergybook\\_english.pdf](http://www.neahin.org/assets/pdfs/foodallergybook_english.pdf)

<http://www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=4>

<http://www.nsba.org/Board-Leadership/SchoolH>

[http://allergyready.com/courses/ANAPH-010/data/downloads/food\\_allergy\\_action\\_plan\\_revised.pdf](http://allergyready.com/courses/ANAPH-010/data/downloads/food_allergy_action_plan_revised.pdf)  
[health/Food-Allergy-Policy-Guide.pdf](http://health/Food-Allergy-Policy-Guide.pdf)

[http://www.stlouischildrens.org/sites/default/files/health\\_resources/advocacy/files/sections/administratorsprincipals.pdf](http://www.stlouischildrens.org/sites/default/files/health_resources/advocacy/files/sections/administratorsprincipals.pdf)

<http://www.foodallergy.org/document.doc?id=136>