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February 9, 2021

The Honorable Max Wise
Senate
Kentucky General Assembly
Frankfort, KY

RE: Support for SB127 – AN ACT relating to student health and safety

Dear Senator Wise,

Allergy & Asthma Network, a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting and improving the health of people with allergies, asthma and related conditions, supports your sponsored bill SB127 which allows school districts to stock quick-relief bronchodilator inhalers for use by trained personnel or agent in an emergency for a student experiencing symptoms of respiratory distress. This legislation will help any student who either does not have their own medication available or experiences respiratory distress for the first time. We would encourage the committee to consider adding language to include the use of disposable spacers to be used in conjunction with the quick-relief inhalers. These spacers ensure that the medication is being administered properly especially among young children.

With more than 24 million Americans living with asthma, including 6 million children, asthma remains one of the most serious chronic diseases. Asthma is the number one reason that children and youth are absent from school. Approximately 3,600 Americans die each year from asthma and this chronic condition costs the U.S. healthcare system \$80 billion annually in direct healthcare expenditures (emergency department visits and hospitalizations) and indirect costs from lost productivity (missed school days and work days).

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that schools develop and maintain comprehensive management plans to support children with lower airway disorders, such as asthma, and help control their disorders while in school. Most schools, unfortunately, do not maintain such plans and are ill-prepared for emergencies. This type of preparation and management in schools will not only improve a child's health, but also ensure students are able to focus on learning while in school.

When the *Asthmatic Schoolchildren's Treatment and Health Management Act* was signed into law in 2004, it led to legislation in all 50 states ensuring schoolchildren with asthma had the right to self-carry and administer their quick-relief bronchodilator inhaler at school. There is a movement in states across the country to pass laws or guidelines that standardize asthma management plans in schools and permit schools to stock emergency supplies of quick-relief bronchodilator inhalers with a prescription and administer to a student believed to be in respiratory distress. Currently 14 states (Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah and Virginia) have



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laws or guidelines in place. At the federal level, the *School-Based Allergies and Asthma Management Program Act* was recently signed into law to encourage more schools around the country to put comprehensive asthma and allergy management programs in place and proper training of school staff.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and considering our recommendation. We hope this bill becomes law as we continue to work to see similar legislation regarding chronic respiratory disease management in the remaining states. Please contact me or our Director of Advocacy Charmayne Anderson at 800-878-4403 if you have any questions. To learn more about Allergy & Asthma Network, visit AllergyAsthmaNetwork.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tonya A. Winders". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tonya A. Winders
President and CEO