



## **GUIDANCE FOR MEDICAL SEIZURE SAFE SCHOOLS, ACTION PLANS, AND TRAINING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background**

The Epilepsy Foundation reports that 1 in 26 people living in the U.S. will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), approximately 6 out of every 1,000 students have been diagnosed with epilepsy. The [CDC](#) also reports that the estimated number of active epilepsy cases in Colorado for individuals between the ages of 0-17 years is 7,800.

In 2021, the Colorado General Assembly passed [HB-21-113](#) to prioritize school safety for children who have been diagnosed with a seizure disorder, including epilepsy. This bill addresses strategic resources for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools to provide a safer environment for these students, including school personnel training, individualized seizure action plans and seizure care guidelines.

Students with seizure disorders may need seizure-related medical interventions in the school setting or during school activities. The school nurse or health-care practitioner shares responsibility with the school administrators for management of the student's seizure disorder while the student is at school, during any school-sponsored activities, and while in transit to or from school or school-sponsored activities if being transported by school district personnel.

#### **Definitions**

Appropriate staff: One or more employees of the school whom the principal or equivalent executive, in consultation with the school nurse or health-care practitioner, determined to be the appropriate recipient or recipients of free seizure recognition and first aid training developed by recognized sources on epilepsy and seizure disorders. This may include, but need not be limited to, employees who have direct contact with and supervision of students who have a seizure disorder.

Designated employee: Employee of the school who is designated and trained by the school nurse or health-care practitioner on how to administer or assist with the administration of seizure treatment and medications, seizure rescue medications, and manual vagus nerve stimulation.

Delegation: The assignment to a competent individual the authority to perform in a selected situation a selected nursing task included in the practice of practical nursing as defined in section 12-255-104(10), C.R.S., or in the practice of professional nursing as defined in section 12-255-104(8), C.R.S.

#### **Public School Responsibilities**

1. Within 60 days after the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year, and each year thereafter, each public school must provide training to one or more appropriate staff on:
  - The recognition of the signs and symptoms of seizures; *and*
  - The appropriate steps for seizure first aid.

2. A public school must have at least one designated employee who has met the training requirements necessary to administer or assist with the administration of seizure treatment medications, seizure rescue medications, and manual vagus nerve stimulation no later than 8 weeks after the school has been:
  - Notified of a student who has been diagnosed with a seizure disorder, ***or***
  - Received an individualized seizure action plan signed by the student's parent or legal guardian, **whichever is later.**

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibility Considerations**

1. A student's parent or legal guardian is encouraged to submit the student's individualized seizure action plan or amended seizure action plan to the student's school at the following times:
  - At the beginning of the year or upon the student's enrollment;
  - As soon as practical following the student's diagnosis of a seizure disorder; or
  - If a student's health condition changes significantly during the school year.
2. A student's parent or legal guardian is encouraged to inform the school, in a timely manner, of any changes needed to the following:
  - The student's individualized seizure action plan; or
  - The student's emergency contact information.

### **STAFF TRAINING**

#### **Level 1: Training for appropriate staff on the recognition of the signs and symptoms of seizures and seizure first aid**

On a yearly basis, public schools must provide **free** training on the recognition of the signs and symptoms of seizures and the appropriate steps for seizure first aid to one or more appropriate staff. The identification of appropriate staff includes the following:

1. One or more employees of the school whom the principal or equivalent executive, in consultation with the school nurse or health-care practitioner, determines to be the appropriate recipient/s; and
2. Including, but not limited to, employees who supervise or have direct contact with students who have a seizure disorder.

#### **Level 2: Training for designated employee(s) on the administration of, or assisting with the administration of seizure treatment medications, seizure rescue medications, and manual vagus nerve stimulation**

When a school receives notification that a student has been diagnosed with a seizure disorder or receives an individualized seizure action plan signed by the student's parent or legal guardian, the school must have at least one designated employee who has met the training requirements identified by the school nurse or health-care practitioner. Utilizing the student's individualized seizure action plan,

the school nurse or health-care practitioner will determine the specific training requirements necessary for the designated employee to administer or assist with the administration of seizure treatment medications, seizure rescue medications, and manual vagus nerve stimulation device.

Student health needs related to seizure care can be complex. Delegation decisions by the school nurse or health-care practitioner to ensure that designated employee(s) are properly trained require individualized assessment, judgment, and evaluation.

**Free training courses for school personnel, developed by recognized sources on epilepsy and seizure disorders and approved by Colorado Department of Education, can be found here:**

[Epilepsy Foundation: Seizure Training for School Personnel](#) (75 minutes)

[Epilepsy Foundation: Seizure Training for School Nurses: Caring for Students](#) (2.75 hours)

## **INDIVIDUALIZED SEIZURE ACTION PLANS**

Serious emergencies rarely happen, but when they do, having a plan that is simple, easy to follow, and well organized provides responders with the approach they need for an effective response. If the parent or legal guardian of a student with a diagnosed seizure disorder has not submitted the student's individualized seizure action plan or amended seizure action plan to the school, the school nurse should work with the student's parent or legal guardian to develop the plan.

The student-specific individualized seizure action plan should be created by the school nurse or health-care practitioner, in conjunction with the student's parent or legal guardian and the student's physician, as appropriate, and designed to identify and prepare for the healthcare needs of a student diagnosed with a seizure disorder. Additionally, a public school must follow the district's or school's medication policy in approving the individualized seizure action plan and ensure that it is in accordance with the "[Nurse and Nurse Aide Practice Act](#)," article 255 of title 12 of the Colorado Revised Statutes.

When developing an individualized seizure action plan, schools should consider the following:

- Parent/guardian emergency contact information and signature line
- Student education and seizure history, including
  - Type of seizure
  - Seizure triggers
  - Seizure treatments and/or therapies received at home
  - History of Section 504 plan or IEP
  - When to call 911
- Healthcare provider recommendations that include:
  - Easy-to-follow steps such as "If you see this, do this"
  - Seizure rescue treatment orders as needed
  - Health care provider signature line

A sample plan can be found here: [Colorado Seizure Action Plan and Medication Orders](#)

## **SAMPLE CHECKLIST STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES FOR THE SCHOOL NURSE**

### ***Staff Training Level 1: Appropriate staff to receive training on the recognition of the signs and symptoms of seizures and seizure first aid***

- Collaboration between school administrators and school health staff plays a key role in the success of the training program
- Consult with the principal or equivalent executive regarding the identification of appropriate staff to receive training on signs and symptoms of seizures and seizure first aid
- Develop a communication plan to notify appropriate staff regarding the training on recognizing signs and symptoms of seizures and seizure first aid
- Review policies on bullying of and discrimination against students with disabilities, including seizure disorders
- Review the seriousness of seizure disorders
- Review FERPA privacy and legal rights of students with seizure disorders
- Discuss how to communicate during medical emergencies including who to contact for help in an emergency
- Discuss school-wide response to seizures in the following settings (classrooms, playgrounds, cafeteria, field trips, including overnight, transportation, before and after school sponsored events, etc.)

### **Staff Training Level 2: Designated staff to receive training on how to administer or assist with the administration of seizure treatments and medications**

- Review checklist in Staff Training Level 1
- Identify staff designated to administer or assist with administration of seizure treatments and medications, and consider the following:
  - Staff with direct contact with students with seizure disorders; and
  - Staff who supervise students with seizure disorders, including cafeteria, playground, before-and-after-school sponsored events, transportation, and fieldtrip monitors
- The school nurse or health-care practitioner should ensure that any tasks or responses delegated to designated employees are appropriate for delegation
- Ensure staff who have been identified to administer or assist with administration of seizure treatments and medications have taken the approved training

### **School Nurse considerations when reviewing training with staff:**

- Emphasize team approach to support students with seizure disorders
- Encourage parent/guardian to provide an individualized seizure action plan
  - At the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment
  - As soon as practical
- Review student's individual seizure action plan
- Discuss the importance of partnering with parents, including:
  - Encouraging parents to provide an individualized seizure action plan at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment
  - Assisting with establishing a medical home
  - Assisting with access to state child health insurance as needed

- Discuss storage and access of emergency medications
- Establish communication system for use in emergencies
- Establish a post-event debrief protocol
- Emphasize the social-emotional impact on students with seizure disorders and offer suggestions on supporting related needs
- Emphasize the weight of responsibilities and quality of life for parents with seizure disorders and offer suggestions that use a family-centered approach
- Review legal information related to students with seizure disorders including:
  - State guidelines and statutes related to students with seizure disorders
  - Section 504 requirements
  - IDEA requirements
  - Balance between safety and confidentiality

## RESOURCES

Colorado Department of Education, 2021. [School Nursing and Health – Health Conditions and Care Plans: Epilepsy/Seizures](#).

Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, 2021. Division of Professions and Occupations – Board of Nursing, Nursing Rules and Regulations [3 CCR 716-1](#).

Epilepsy Foundation, 2021. [Managing Your Child’s Epilepsy](#).

[Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado and Wyoming](#), 2021.

National Association of School Nurses (NASN), 2014. [Recommended Qualifications for the Unlicensed Assistive Personnel \(UAP\)](#).