



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Sen. Gounardes' Bill to Require Life-Saving Epinephrine in Public Venues Passes in State Legislature

ANDREW GOUNARDES May 30, 2024

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC HEALTH, ALLERGIES**



After an EpiPen saved her brother's life, a young Brooklynite pushed for legislation that ensures epinephrine is available at large public venues like auditoriums, stadiums and concert halls.

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Albany, NY - The New York State Senate voted 61-0 yesterday, May 29th, to pass legislation carried by State Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal that requires life-saving epinephrine auto-injectors at all large public venues across New York

State. The legislation was previously passed by the State Assembly last week.

The bill (*S.1078A-Gounardes/A.2885A-Rosenthal*) requires places of public assembly with a capacity of at least 1,000 people—including stadiums, ballparks, gymnasiums, concert or recital halls, theaters, indoor and outdoor amphitheaters, and auditoriums—to have an epinephrine auto-injector device available whenever such places are used for a public or private event, and to have at least one person present who is trained to use such a device.

More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies, and 20 million have food allergies specifically, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC says food allergies are responsible for approximately 30,000 emergency department visits and 150–200 deaths each year. The advocacy group FARE estimates nearly two million New Yorkers have food allergies—a number larger than the combined populations of Manhattan and Rochester.

Lucia Zaremba, a Bay Ridge resident and Poly Prep student, began advocating for greater accessibility to epinephrine after her brother John unexpectedly went into severe anaphylactic shock. John's skin turned blue, and as he struggled to breathe, he turned to their mother and said "I don't want to die." Luckily, their mother had an epinephrine auto-injector—commonly known as an EpiPen—handy. Moments after she injected John, his skin returned to normal and he could breathe once again.

The experience got Lucia thinking: what would have happened if John didn't have an EpiPen? How many children forget their EpiPens at home on any given day? How many people with unknown allergies don't carry an EpiPen at all?

Epinephrine devices are the only effective treatment for anaphylaxis, and such tools are already required in day care centers in New York City. To Lucia, it seemed like "common

sense” that there be life-saving epinephrine in all large public venues, as Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are now. She pitched the idea to Senator Gounardes, who introduced the legislation in the State Senate. Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal introduced companion legislation in the State Assembly.

“Anaphylaxis can be terrifying and deadly,” said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “Requiring epinephrine devices to be easily accessible to New Yorkers at public venues is a no-brainer, and ensures families don’t have to live in fear every single time they go out to dinner, a concert or a ballgame. I’m proud to have sponsored this legislation, and I’m grateful to have worked alongside my constituent Lucia Zaremba, who approached me with this idea after an EpiPen saved her brother John’s life. Thanks to her bravery and determination, we’ve passed a bill that can help millions of Americans live their lives more safely and securely.”

"Epinephrine can save a person's life, but only when it is immediately accessible," said **Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF - Manhattan)**. "There is no telling when or where a person may experience an allergic reaction, making it even more important that public venues be equipped to respond. For many years I have worked to pass laws that expand access to epinephrine and training opportunities to use these devices. I applaud Lucia Zaremba for her determination to help make a change that will protect the more than two million New Yorkers living with food allergies. Concert halls, stadiums and other public spaces should be safe for everyone and this legislation will help to ensure it."

"I got to grow up with my best friend because an EpiPen saved my brother’s life,” said **Lucia Zaremba**. “No one should ever lose someone they love to a food allergy and this bill is an important and common sense step toward protecting people with food allergies in New York. I applaud the Senate and the Assembly for recognizing that EpiPens save lives!"

"Ensuring the availability of life-saving epinephrine in all large public venues across New York State is not just a legislative win; it is a monumental step towards protecting New Yorkers who live with the daily threat of severe allergic reactions," said **Thomas Silvera, Co-Founder/Vice President, Elijah-Alavi Foundation**. "This bill represents hope and safety for families who have experienced the devastating impact of anaphylaxis. Together, we can prevent unnecessary tragedies and create safer environments for everyone. I am immensely proud of the progress that was made and all the lives that will be protected from here on out."

"Whether it is visiting Yankee Stadium in the Bronx or the JMA Dome in Syracuse, New York's two million food allergy families are now safer thanks to the work of Sen. Gounardes, Assemblymember Rosenthal, Lucia Zaremba, and the hundreds of advocates who supported this legislation," said **Sung Poblete, PhD, RN, CEO of FARE**. "FARE is proud to have endorsed this much-needed bill, traveled to Albany to lobby for it, and looks forward to working in other states to pass it."

"Concerning passage today of legislation requiring the stocking of life-saving epinephrine in large venues here in New York State, Allergy Advocates New York is very grateful to State Senator Gounardes and Assemblymember Rosenthal for sponsoring this vital legislation," said **Jon Terry, President of Allergy Advocates NY**. "Over 2 million residents of our state have life-threatening food allergies and are at risk for dangerous attacks of anaphylaxis. Epinephrine is a safe and effective medication for treatment of life-threatening allergies. Once this law is enacted, our organization believes many lives will be saved, particularly individuals and family members who have not been properly diagnosed for life-threatening allergies. Toni Taylor, the co-founder of Allergy Advocates New York and I thank the Zaremba family for their patient and persistent leadership for advocacy in our state on this important public health issue. Automatic electronic defibrillators (AED) devices are readily

available for saving lives from heart-attacks; epinephrine auto-injector (EAI) devices should be, too."

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2023-S1078A

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- ◦ In Committee Assembly
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- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Requires places of public assembly to maintain epinephrine auto-injector devices and to have at least one employee who is trained in its use

January 10, 2023

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Andrew Gounardes**

Do you support this bill?