

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

The 2021 Legislative Session began on January 5th, but looks a little different this year as we all navigate a virtual world. In such unprecedented times, which have brought a renewed focus on community and personal health, we're reminded of the power we have in sharing our personal stories. As you meet with legislators, please share your epilepsy journey and ask for their support on these legislative items.

1. Seizure Smart Schools (Senate File 654, Lang | House File 469, Moller)

This year we continue our fight to pass Seizure Smart School Legislation which ensures that school personnel is prepared to recognize and respond appropriately to a student having a seizure. It's estimated that 7,400 children with epilepsy live in Minnesota, a state which has just over 3,000 public, private, and charter schools. By bringing awareness to the entire education community, students living with epilepsy or a seizure disorder can feel safe in school and reach their full academic potential. Five other states have passed Seizure Smart Schools Legislation including Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey. Together, we can ensure that Minnesota joins the list in 2021.

2. Rare Disease Access to Care (Senate File 464, Draheim | House File 626, Reyer)

A major priority this year is working with our partners at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare to improve access to care for individuals with rare diseases. We know that on average a person sees eight providers before they're diagnosed with a rare disease and face year-long waits to receive proper care. This legislation works to reduce barriers and streamline the processes, improving the flexibility of health plans to allow individuals to see the specialists they need for diagnosis and treatment.

3. Minnesota Human Rights Act Amendment

The Human Rights Act of Minnesota was written 17 years before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The gap between these laws means when individuals with disabilities are going through the interactive process with their employer to determine accommodations they can only receive help from federal agencies. This bill allows state agencies like the Minnesota Council on Disability and Minnesota Council on Human Rights to be more responsive and support people with disabilities to get the accommodations they need.

