

Calif. law encourages EpiPens at all schools

By Joyce Tsaijtsai, San Jose Mercury News

A growing national consciousness on the dangers of food allergies is reflected in a state law that goes into effect Jan. 1, recommending schools keep vital medication on hand to prevent student deaths.

The Emergency Epinephrine Auto-injector Act, which was passed in September, recommends that at least one EpiPen injector is stocked at each public school, and at least one staff member is trained to use it. Similar laws have been passed in about 45 states nationwide, according to the nonprofit advocacy group Food Allergy Research & Education. In addition, a federal law was passed last year that rewards states that make it mandatory that schools stock epinephrine by giving them preferential treatment in awarding certain grants.

Prior to the law, if students had severe allergies, they had to carry their own EpiPen, or the devices were kept in stock at the school in their name. But EpiPens could not be administered if the devices were in another child's name – all that could be done was to call 911.

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