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To: Chair and Members of the Community & Corporate Services Committee

From: Councillor Blair Lancaster

cc: Amber LaPointe, Committee Clerk
Chris Glenn, Director of Parks and Recreation
Nancy Shea-Nicol, Director of Legal Services & City Solicitor

Date: December 8, 2015

Re: Memo requesting information on having EpiPens available in City Facilities

After the death of 12 year old Maia Santarelli-Gallo due to an allergic reaction at the Mapleview Mall food court in Burlington in March of 2013, the issue of providing Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (EpiPens) in Burlington was brought to my attention through the media reports and local residents as well as the Burlington Firefighters Association. In addition, I recall one other death of a child in Burlington from anaphylactic shock as well as I experienced first hand a teenager working for me who suffered anaphylactic shock while on a lunch break. Anaphylactic shock can happen at any time to anyone. In the case of the death of 12 year old Maia Santarelli-Gallo, she did not know she had a severe allergy.

Immediately following the death of Maia Santarelli-Gallo, the City of Hamilton Council in April 2013, responded to this issue by voting to provide EpiPens to facilities in Hamilton serving food. McMaster Health Sciences provides oversight to the program, funded by the City of Hamilton, to provide EpiPens to Hamilton facilities and shopping centers.

The Oakville Fire Department under the leadership of Chief Grant and at the request of his firefighters, added EpiPens on their fire trucks in the spring of 2015.

Halton schools have been supporting families of children with severe allergies by providing EpiPens on school sites for years. Sabrina's Law, an Act to Protect Anaphylactic Pupils, was named after a young girl who died of anaphylactic shock following exposure in her school. This law came into effect in January, 2006. Under separate cover, I have provided confidential information regarding the Board of Education's position as it pertains to delivering EpiPens in school facilities.

Employees of the City of Burlington who have taken first aid training in the past two years have been trained on how to use an EpiPen. City of Burlington provides first aid training in-line with the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance. This is recognized to meet WSIB standards.

The technological advances of the EpiPen have made it so simple to use that anyone can administer the device. It is also advanced technology that made it possible for anyone to administer the life saving defibrillator which we now have at all City and Regional facilities. Ten years ago, only medical professionals would be deemed to be qualified to use a defibrillator machine.

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis (pronounced anna-fill-axis) is a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death. Individuals with food allergies at risk of anaphylaxis would be treated with an injection of epinephrine, (a natural product of the adrenal glands in all humans) which contains life-saving medication in case of an allergic reaction and can reverse symptoms within seconds.

What causes an anaphylactic reaction?

Food is one of the most common causes of anaphylaxis, but insect stings, medications, latex, and exercise can also cause reactions.

The purpose of this initiative is to make EpiPens immediately available to a person having an allergic reaction and make our city facilities and services safer. The staff direction addresses the most identifiable areas of concern for immediate consideration in the City of Burlington including liability.

A little girl died at Mapleview Mall waiting for help, time is of the essence during a reaction and there is no time to waste.

In order to increase safety in our city facilities I am requesting that the following motion be approved:

Direct the Director of Parks and Recreation to provide a recommendation on implementing a program where EpiPens would be available in city facilities as a one year trial program; and

Direct the Director of Parks and Recreation to provide information on the cost of making a bulk purchase of EpiPens funded on a one time basis from the Tax Stabilization Fund; and

Direct the Director of Parks and Recreation to provide a recommendation on the feasibility of implementing a peanut-free environment at all city facilities; and

Direct the Director of Legal Services & City Solicitor to provide a recommendation on requiring all restaurants within the City of Burlington to have EpiPens onsite; and

Direct the Director of Legal Services & City Solicitor to provide information on risks of having or not having EpiPens available in city facilities as per the City's responsibility under Duty of Care, the Good Samaritans Act and any other legislation.

I have documented a substantial amount of research on this issue that I would be happy to share with Council and staff.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Councillor Blair Lancaster
Ward 6