

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 464

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

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Hearing Date: March 31, 2021 8:00 AM

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Han Wen, Dr.

University of North Texas

Lantana, TX

I'm writing to get your support to pass HB 464 to help increase food allergy awareness in Texas restaurants. I've been conducting food allergy research for nine years and was involved in multiple projects regarding food allergy training modules and improving communication between customers with food allergies and restaurant staff.

There are numerous reasons and facts suggesting the importance of HB 464, especially for restaurants in Texas. Please see some of them below:

- First of all, the number of individuals with food allergies is growing in the U.S. It is estimated that about 32 million individuals suffer from food allergies in the U.S. (Food Allergy Research and Education [FARE], 2021; Gupta et al., 2019).
- Second, even though the severity of food allergy reactions varies among individuals, the food allergy reactions can be life-threatening. Statistics have shown that 100 to 200 deaths occur yearly due to severe allergic reactions to food (NIAID, 2017). Moreover, food allergy reactions are responsible for 200,000 emergency room visits annually (Clark et al., 2011).
- Third, many customers with food allergies had experienced food allergy reactions after eating in restaurants. Previous studies found that 14% to 65% of consumers reported experiencing food allergy reactions after dining out at restaurants (Furlong et al., 2001; Kwon & Lee, 2012; Lämmel & Schnadt, 2009). The lack of awareness of food allergies among restaurant staff was one of the major causes of these food allergy reactions (Wen & Kwon, 2016; 2017; 2019).
- Fourth, many states had established laws and regulations to mandate food allergy posters or training for the restaurant industry (<https://www.foodallergy.org/resources/food-allergies-and-restaurants>). Texas is not among these states. I believe there is a strong need for Texas to move forward and establish food allergy related laws to better protect residents with food allergies.

Beth Martinez

Austin Families with Food Allergies

Austin, TX

I am a parent of a 17 year old who is anaphylactic to peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, milk and egg and ask that you please vote in favor of HB 464. Imagine being a teenager and not being able to eat safely in most restaurants due to a lack of awareness by kitchen staff about the difference they make in people's lives. Most of the time my son will sit with only a root beer to consume while his friends eat pizza and burgers because eating a burger made on the same grill as a cheeseburger can be life threatening to him.

We went to England last year and there every restaurant is required to list every ingredient used in each dish so that people with food allergies can look through an allergy binder and determine if they can get a safe meal at each restaurant. All we are asking for here in Texas is a poster. A simple poster that can at the very least begin a conversation in the kitchen about how to accommodate the safety needs of diners.

Please pass HB 464.

Thank you.

Eddie Raz

Self

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Fulshear, TX

This bill may save the life of an individual with a food allergy. Cases of individuals with food allergies are continuing to grow and this will help save lives.

Felicia Cardenas

Self

Seguin, TX

Hopefully a life could be saved. With a daily reminder for a restaurant employee.

Emily Waters

Self

Austin, TX

It is important to the families with food allergies to feel comfortable dining and taking out food from establishments. Families go through a lot to protect their members from accidental exposure. Having restaurants be aware and cognizant of allergens would help ease families worries and create a safer community for people with food allergies.

Nancy Flores

self

Austin, TX

I'm the mother to a 13 year-old with multiple, life threatening food and drug allergies.

Eating out in restaurants is a risky situation for kids with food allergies and it's imperative that food establishment staff have information and awareness about safety protocols and allergens.

Katey Massey

Self - mental health professional

San Antonio, TX

Please support keeping our children safe at restaurants!! Please support HB 464!!

Michelle S

Self

Friendswood, TX

I have a 7 year old son with multiple life threatening food allergies and we don't go to sit down restaurants due to his allergies. We only allow two fast food restaurants. It breaks my heart to think of all the exclusion in his future due to not being able to go to restaurants because of their high risk nature. Anything that can be done to make things safer for the food allergy community would be appreciated. Please pass this bill.

RICHARD Dixon, Mr.

"Self" Management

Buda, TX

Awareness cannot be obtained without education and health care. If this helps to save one life, then it's worth it.

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Maribel Gonzalez

Self

McAllen, TX

I know someone personally who lost her only child due to food allergies and I was heartbroken when this could have easily been prevented. My heart still hurts for my friend. I pray this bill passes to help others of losing a loved one today and in the future.

George Kelemen

Texas Retailers Association (TRA)

Austin, TX

The Texas Retailers Association registers AGAINST HB 464.

Louise H Bethea, MD

Texas Allergy, Asthma & Immunology Society

SPRING, TX

Food allergies affect over 1.5 million Texans. Studies show that families of those with food allergies do not frequent restaurants or other food service establishments resulting in a loss of millions of dollars from the industry. Lives have been lost in Texas due to lack of awareness of food allergies and their severity. According to a survey by the National Restaurant Association, 87% of restaurants believe food allergies are important but 47% concede they do not train their staff. Another national survey of 110 restaurant managerial staff revealed that 22% of the participants had food allergy reactions occur at their restaurants. This bill would be a start in education for those in the food service industry in Texas to make their establishments safe for consumers. The federal government has recently recognized sesame as a significant allergen. Would it be possible to add sesame to your list of allergic foods?

Jennifer Tharp

self - student

San Antonio, TX

FOR HB 464 I am in favor of this bill because I believe requiring these food allergy awareness posters in restaurants will increase public safety. My sister has severe food allergies and I worry about her health whenever we go to restaurants or eat out. I know that if the restaurant staff is uneducated about the severity of food allergies and/or does not know how to properly prepare a meal for a person with allergies, my sister's life could be put in danger. These posters will shed light on how to safely cater to a customer with food allergies and could save lives. This bill is extremely important and has no negative impacts if it were to be implemented. Please consider passing this bill to make our communities safer.

David Pan, Community Liaison

CHCS

San Antonio, TX

I support this bill.

Mark Tharp

self - technical director at Lackland Air Force Base

San Antonio, TX

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Please support HB 464 to help protect those with life-threatening food allergies in Texas restaurants. As a father of a daughter with severe food allergies, I've seen first-hand how misunderstood these allergies are and how important it is for chefs, cooks, food service workers, wait staff, etc. to strictly observe safety practices to serve customers items that do not contain their known allergens. More than 32 million Americans suffer from food allergies. There is no cure for food allergies and strict avoidance of the allergen is the only way to prevent allergic reactions, which may include life-threatening anaphylaxis. Trace amounts of allergens can quickly cause severe allergic reactions. It's difficult for those afflicted with food allergies to eat safely in restaurants, not knowing if their meals are safe. Our restaurants must educate staff on the fundamental facts surrounding food allergies and implement practical procedures to keep those with allergies safe, including preventing cross contact with foods that may include their harmful allergens. Many feel isolated and "left out" of the social events focused on food which are so prevalent in our culture. The legislation before you mandates food allergy awareness posters for staff in Texas restaurants to help provide safe food options for the growing number of Texans with food allergies. My daughter faced many challenges in her childhood due to her food allergies and my hope is that passing practical, common sense food allergy safety legislation will increase both food allergy awareness and food service industry practices to keep her and millions like her safe when they eat in Texas restaurants.

Ana Hawkins

Self

San Antonio, TX

Please know how important this bill is to keep people with severe food allergies safe!

Selena Bluntzer

Self

Schertz, TX

First off, I'd like to thank you all for considering this topic. Millions of Americans suffer from life-threatening food allergies and my daughter is one of them. My daughter has only eaten restaurant food a few times in her life. We just consider it to be too risky. We hope that will change over time, with measures like this one under consideration. I understand that this is Texas and nobody likes mandates, but this is something simple that can help raise awareness and could help save lives. It does not put any undue burden on anyone and can only help. I hope that you will consider voting in support of this bill to help so many of your constituents.

Jennifer Caudill

Self / homemaker

San Antonio, TX

Please vote for hb 464. As a parent of 2 food allergy kids,I can't stress how important this is.

Jill Michael

Self

Sugar Land, TX

My son has life threatening allergies. It is a risk for us in going to restaurants to trust the staff is fully knowledgeable what it means to take precautions for cross contamination in the kitchen, etc. As food allergies have grown exponentially over the years, restaurants should have a vested interest in making sure customers are comfortable going to their establishments. Sometimes we forgo eating out if it doesn't seem like a safe place. There could be a growing segment of customers who might increase going to restaurants if something like this is in place.

Elaine Dolan

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Self

San Antonio, TX

More awareness is crucial to preventing food allergy reactions and death. We have a 2 year old who is severely allergic to peanuts, and so many food service employees are unaware and improperly trained on food allergens. Most of the time we skip eating out because it's too risky.

Daisy Vita

self, nurse

Houston, TX

I support this bill as I work with many food allergy families and have seen what an ingestion of an allergen can do. Anaphylaxis is serious and I have heard many stories of it happening at restaurants because the staff overlooked it or did not understand what a food allergy is. This bill will help keep our food allergy community safe and feel more comfortable with eating out.

Amber Patel

Self

Austin, TX

I have a child with multiple life threatening food allergies. We eat home about 98% of the time but situations arise or emergencies happen where we find ourselves out of the house needing to grab a quick bite for our kiddo. These situations are fraught with anxiety. Do waiters know that butter is still considered dairy? Will they relay information appropriately to cook staff, do they know tahini is sesame...etc. In the UK, where my child was born, restaurant owners have gone to jail for not taking allergies serious (peanuts in sauces). I think this type of negligence is due to the failure of people realizing food allergies are serious can be deadly. Everyone should be aware of the seriousness of food allergies and particularly those handling food orders and food. I am FOR this Bill that increases awareness, educates people, and helps to keep all people with food allergies safe.

Jennifer Sell

Self

Midland, TX

Please vote for house bill 464. My 10 year old daughter has multiple food allergies and going out to eat always takes preparation and careful ordering to keep her safe. With food allergies becoming more prevalent it only makes sense to have food service workers properly educated to help prevent anaphylaxis in child and adults. Reactions caused by lack of awareness, hidden ingredients, or cross contact can help be prevented if all food service staff had the appropriate knowledge. Thank you.

Menda Heredia Eulenfeld

self

Bishop, TX

Pleas vote FOR House Bill 464. Food allergies can be life-threatening and trace amounts of allergens can cause a reaction. It's important that restaurants have increase food allergy awareness in order to keep our loved ones safe. My cousin, Sergio Lopez, died after eating a taco from a restaurant in McAllen, Texas. He was only 24 years old when he died. He had asked the server of the restaurant if they used peanut oils or had any peanut products and he was told there was none but it actually had peanut butter in the mole sauce.

The lack of food allergy training by the restaurant staff cost him his life.

Nancy Masso

Texas Resident

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Brownsville, TX

I support this bill and ask that you encourage others to support it and save lives. Thank you-

Maya Mackey

Self, student

San Antonio, TX

This bill is necessary to keep those with food allergies safe. Increasing awareness of food allergens is a simple step to save lives. As someone with a food allergy, I want to feel safe when dining out, and having an informed and aware establishment to eat at can be such a relief. Please pass this bill.

Rebecca Salazar

Students with peanut allergies

Harlingen, TX

I hope that this bill is fully supported. As a former teacher I have seen so many kiddos with peanut allergies. One of my former students, Sergio Leone, lost his life due to his peanut allergy by eating at a restaurant where peanut products were used in the food he was eating. It's so very important to raise awareness to be able to protect anyone who suffers from food born allergies that can potentially be life threatening. Thank you for your time and consideration in passing this bill.

Angela Yarbrough

self / software engineering

Austin, TX

This bill will help save lives. I am a parent of a child who is also severely allergic to some of the top 8 allergens. A similar post is in our school's cafeteria and it raises the awareness tremendously. Food allergies can be life-threatening. Please pass this bill.

Ilene Garcia

Friend who passed due to allergic reaction

Harlingen, TX

A close friend could still be alive if this information was made available to employees of food establishments. Please pass hb464 so that we can prevent the heartaches of fathers , mothers, brothers and sisters for something that could have been easily prevented by a simple informational workplace poster.

Jennifer Le

Self

Austin, TX

I support HB 464 to have restaurants be more aware and diligent when it comes to serving foods to the public, especially foods that contain the Top 8 Food Allergen. As a mother of a 3 year old with severe food allergies, this is an obstacle we face whenever we dine out and put our trust into the restaurant chefs. My toddler has faced several food allergy reactions due to the carelessness of restaurants, regardless of how many times we double triple check with the staff and chef. He is allergic to dairy, egg and peanut (with dairy and peanut both being anaphylactic). His body breaks into hives, his throat begins to close, his lips turns blue and we immediately have to administer an epi pen and go straight to the hospital. Try explaining this to a suffering 3 year old. There needs to be change and there needs to be awareness for these kids that need advocates and leaders to stand up for them. Thank you.

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Olga De La Rosa

Myself

McAllen, TX

Dear House Committee, it is very important that you pass this bill as I knew Sergio who died because of allergies and I don't want this to happen to anyone else. People should not have to worry about what is in their food when they go to a restaurant. They should feel safe and confident and knowing that the restaurant has information indicating what their food contains. Thank you and please do the right thing.

Maria Leyva

Self

La Joya, TX

Please pass bill. There are a lot of people with food allergies and its only right to educate people that work in food industry to know what is on the food that they are serving. This bill would avoid people to die from a food allergy, just like it happened to Sergio Lopez.

Maricel Marquez-Cabarcas

Self

Houston, TX

Please pass this bill for the safety of the people with allergies. My daughter has had several anaphylactic reactions at restaurants due to food cross contamination and lack of awareness by food staff on safety protocols

Nancy Gordon, Mrs.

Texas Children's Hospital - Trustee as well as myself

Houston, TX

I strongly support this bill! By simply requiring Food service establishments to display a poster relating to food allergen awareness, it would save many children who suffer from food allergies ( as well as some adults), from a trip to the emergency room or the doctors office. And I bet in some instances it would save lives. Such a simple thing to require that could have a major impact.

Thank you for your consideration of this and for your service to our state.

Nancy Gordon

Eloise Smith

Self

Katy, TX

Please support this bill. I am a grandmother of two boys who have extensive food allergies. Some of them they have outgrown, however I remember the fear of eating out with them and always having to check the ingredients as well as the preparation of the food they were going to eat.

This should be a standard especially since it impacts the life and health of the individual with food allergies. Thank you for consideration of the bill.

Danielle Williams, Mrs.

Self/nurse

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Houston, TX

Please pass this bill to help alleviate the stress of eating for food allergy individuals. Lives depend on this.

Mary Johnson

Self

Austin, TX

I'm the parent of two children who have experienced anaphylaxis from peanuts and cashews. This bill will not only help keep kids like mine alive, it will also help food service establishments by increasing awareness of a life-threatening issue. Thank you!

Manuel Garza

Self Engineer

Houston, TX

Inroads are being made by consumers working with food service professionals on awareness of allergens in the ingredients of their menu items. I am seeing more structure and protocols in chain restaurants providing information on publicly accessible websites, etc. But the last stage of food preparation is the human factor; and handling. This is where variation increases and processes break down, the first step in providing structure is by driving awareness in a uniform way.

Jasmine Rodriguez

Self

Buda, TX

For HB464

Jolie Altman

Self

Buda, TX

Restaurants need to post in plain sight about any food allergens present in their establishment. My neighbor lost her only child due to an allergic reaction to food allergens that they were not aware were present. This could have and should have been prevented and nobody else should have to experience such a horrible, heart breaking loss in this way.

Carla Davis, MD

Self, Allergy/Immunology Physician

Houston, TX

Please vote FOR House Bill 464. I am the Director of the Texas Children's Hospital Food Allergy Program and I have several patients who have had reactions and almost died in restaurants due to being given food that has the very food protein to which they were allergic. We need more awareness measures for food allergies.

You may be aware that there are 200,000 emergency department visits for food allergy reactions per year. Surveys show that 30-50% of food allergic patients report 1 or more reactions in the past year. The FDA calculates there are 150 deaths per year in the US. Food reactions are the #1 cause of ED visits for anaphylaxis and are increasing in number each year.

Research suggests that more than half of fatal food allergy reactions are triggered by food consumed outside the home. (1,2,3)

According to a survey by the National Restaurant Association, some 87 percent of restaurants believe food allergies are extremely

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

important and expect increased attention to it, yet 43 percent concede they do not train their staff on food allergens. (4)

Researchers at Auburn University surveyed 110 restaurant managerial staff in the U.S. from both independent and chain restaurants to investigate the levels of awareness and preparedness related to serving customers with food allergies. Among their findings, nearly 22 percent of participants indicated food allergy reactions had occurred at their restaurants in the past year. Also, even though 80 percent of participants indicated they had received training about food allergies, there were wide gaps in knowledge about food allergies. For example, about 40 percent believed that simply removing a food allergen from a plated meal could prevent an allergic reaction. (5)

Currently, the revenue lost from food allergy families avoiding restaurant dining is estimated at \$45 million each week – more than \$2 billion annually.

The global food market for those with food allergies is projected to exceed \$24.8 billion by 2020. (6)

The multiplier effect of more than 15 million Americans on restaurant patronage can have a substantial impact on those establishments accommodating the food allergy customer.

I know an educational poster in restaurants would make employees mindful of the impact of food allergies on their customers. We believe employees would be more careful and ask the food preparers and consult with the chef and kitchen staff to ascertain answers for their customers when questions arise.

PLEASE VOTE FOR HB 464.

1 Bock SA...Sampson H. J Allergy Clin Immunol. 2007; 119(4): 1016-8.

2 Bock SA...Sampson HA. J Allergy Clin Immunol. 2001; 107(1): 191-3.

3 Sampson HA...Rosen J. N Engl J Med.1992; 327(6): 380-4.

4 National Restaurant Association-commissioned survey by Product Evaluations, 2012

5 Lee YM, Xu H. J FoodServ Bus Res. 2015; 18(5): 454-469.

6 Food Allergy and Intolerance Products – A Global Strategic Business Report. Global Industry Analysts, Inc., 2016.

Jared Carter

Self

Buda, TX

I support this bill

Amy Rempel

Self. Self employed

Houston, TX

It is such a time consuming effort to go out to eat because I have to call ahead, speak to a manager who is knowledgeable to find out if it's safe. When I arrive either myself or my husband again questions the server, asks the manager again or in a place where you order at the counter we stand and supervise after telling them to change their gloves, put paper down on the counter. Having the conversation about cross contamination is so common for us. I bring a paper bag meal often to places that am I invited to because I am unsure. When I travel the first thing so do is make reservations and phone calls months in advance. It is so hard to feel safe when I eat because I don't have confidence that people understand what needs to be done to make it safe for me. I am an adult but so many are children with these issues. Having mandatory practices for food allergies in place would be life changing for so many. It would help local businesses because we could support restaurants frequently knowing the mandatory practices that have to be done would keep it safe for me.

Kristen Mueller

Texas Children's Hospital Food Allergy Family Network

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Houston, TX

I and my 11-year-old daughter both have to be careful of what we eat in restaurants due to multiple food allergies and sensitivities. Obviously our health is my first priority, so we are extremely cautious when deciding whether to try a new restaurant or join extended family and/or friends in going somewhere new. It makes it less enjoyable to eat out in some ways. However, when we run across a staff that understands food allergies and is responsive to our needs, we are loyal customers! Whether it's a counter-service establishment like Beck's Prime or a fancier establishment like Alice Blue or Rainbow Lodge, knowing a restaurant understands how to handle food-allergic individuals is key to whether or not my family eats there. HB 464 requirements are not only good for the health and safety of Texans like me and my daughter, it's good for drawing new business.

Elisa De La Rosa

Self

Houston, TX

I knew Sergio he was a try artist, musician for the people, young at spirit. Ready to share his talents with the world and serve communities, he died unexpectedly and at a very young age. His mother lost her only son. This was tragic, I hope this bill passes so that we can protect our loved ones from this type of tragedy. No mother or child or father or family should go through this heart break.

Nichole Garcia

Self

Leander, TX

Please pass this bill for safety of all people. Millions of people suffer from food allergies and this could save lives.

Rida Sarwar

Self, Student

Pearland, TX

I support this Bill and think it is vital to the safety of those with food allergies

Tiffany Riojas, Mrs.

Self- program specialist

Houston, TX

This is an easy fix to help save lives. I support this bill.

Rosanne Hatheway

self retired

Buda, TX

Allergies are serious health issue and restaurant employees must take them seriously and know their food dishes to insure health of patrons

Sasha Alvarado, Dr.

Self - allergy immunology physician

COPPELL, TX

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Passage of this bill is so important as the prevalence of food allergy is increasing. Lack of awareness of food allergy can lead to tragic consequences, as in the case of this bill's namesake. I am an allergy immunology physician and during training, encountered a case in which an ill-informed but well-meaning friend served a cake made with Lactaid to a child with cow's milk allergy. The child died of anaphylaxis within an hour. These cases are particularly heart-wrenching due to their preventable nature. This bill has the potential to prevent such senseless deaths caused by simple mistakes.

Regina Mitchell

Self

Buda, TX

I am allergic to peanuts and have a child allergic to peanuts, it is crucial that this bill is past. Our allergy is not just limited to consuming peanuts but airborne as well up to at least 50 feet as we have experienced allergic events. I do my best to read menus and ask questions and ask those around me what they're eating but when Restaurants don't divulge ingredients or servers or management or not aware this poses a problem and makes it dangerous to go and eat in public. Anyone who serves food or is responsible for serving food should train their staff about food allergens and how to react should an emergency arise. When food items that trigger an anaphylactic event are hidden within a recipe or sauce and the server is unaware of its ingredients, it is the responsibility of the cooks, chef, management, owners to label this in menus and to inform their servers each day if needed. It should also be their responsibility to post signage as a warning as proposed in this bill. This should be standardized in the United States as part of an HR protocol state and federal posting regulation. Also it should be part of training for anyone who serves food in any establishment not only in Texas but in the United States. Unfortunately the states rely on bills to get past so publication can happen and be mandated. Please pass this bill for those of us who carry around an EpiPen worried about dying because of food allergies. I promise you, it is frightening when I see peanuts even on a menu at a restaurant in a dish. So many are allergic to other foods and I promise you they feel the same fear and we deserve protection. No one should have to lose their life or their child because a restaurant locks the training information materials, the regulation for posting and communicating with the people they serve food to.

Abigail Restrepo

Self

Buda, TX

This is life or death and should have been passed ages ago. It's a simple training that could save many lives as peanut and nut allergies are very prevalent.

Michelle Raz

My child

Fulshear, TX

It is so extremely important that those in food service establishments are aware of food allergies because people's lives are on the line. A poster with information on allergies that those working in these establishments can see is just another way to keep people with food allergies safe that eat at these establishments.

Lauren Kronisch, MS RD LD

Texas Children's Hospital

Houston, TX

As a dietitian who previously worked with food allergy infants and children, this bill would better support educating restaurant staff about patrons with food allergies and lowering chance of reactions in restaurants by patrons. Most importantly, this can help increase the safety of our Texans with food allergies who want to enjoy eating out at a restaurant like anyone does. Currently, many families whose children have food allergies avoid eating out altogether due to fear of experiencing an allergic reaction while eating out. If patrons feel restaurants are better supporting their needs with respect to their food allergies, they will

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

patronize more restaurants, which will also help support restaurants and the economy.

Becca Tharp

self

San Antonio, TX

FOR HB 464 I have food allergies and want support for this bill to raise food allergy awareness in restaurants.

Allen Lieberman

self-physician

Austin, TX

I appreciate the opportunity to return to the Capitol and provide testimony in support of food allergy legislation and HB464. It was 6 years ago when I provided testimony in support of SB 66, the undesignated epinephrine bill for schools. Thankfully the bill was passed and many children are still alive due to the availability of epinephrine.

The restaurant sign bill will also result in the saving of lives. We are in the midst of a food allergy epidemic. Studies show up to 8% of the population has a food allergy; peanut allergy has tripled in the past 15 years to nearly 2% of the children. These numbers continue to rise with no obvious explanation and no end in sight. Just the slightest exposure to even a trace amount of an allergic food results in instant onset of symptoms. This may include itchy mouth and throat, vomiting, skin rash and difficulty breathing. The difficulty breathing results from swelling in the throat and lungs and may progress to passing out, cardiovascular collapse and death.

There are currently no widely practiced therapies for food allergies. The successful management of food allergies involves strict label reading, avoidance and the availability of epinephrine.

Once a week I hear a story from a family about a near miss episode while dining out. The story that sticks most in my mind is a mom with 3 children ages 2-8, all with peanut allergy. While ordering pancakes for her children in a local, well known establishment, she specifically informed the server her children all had peanut allergy and peanut must be avoided. The server noted peanut on the order form and this was placed with the kitchen. The kitchen staff did not understand this notation and prepared all 3 of the children's pancakes with peanut butter. Fortunately, only one child, the eldest, tried the pancakes first. Being older, he was able to tell right away the food wasn't right and he spit it out before fully ingesting and before the 2 youngest took a bite. The mom was able to treat the child with his epinephrine and aside from being shaky; he was fine and fully recovered. Shockingly, the restaurant did not accept responsibility for their error which almost sent 3 kids to the hospital and even blamed the mom, although she did everything that a good food allergy parent is supposed to do.

I can't help but think how this restaurant bill would change all this. The server, kitchen staff and manager will all have a greater understanding and awareness about food allergy. The server would have better identified the family to the kitchen, the food preparer would have questioned the order, and the manager would have showed greater empathy to the family.

Navigating life with food allergies is a lot like flying a plane, being correct most of the time is not good enough.

Many states have established laws and regulations to mandate food allergy posters or training for the restaurant industry. I believe there is a strong need for Texas

Jesse Peralez, VP

Center for Health Care Services

New Braunfels, TX

My name is Jesse Peralez and I support HB 3621 by Rep. Cortez. This bill would create a pilot program in Bexar County for longer term stays for individuals who struggle with mental illness, substance use disorders or co-occurring disorders. Currently, HHSC rules only allow for stays of up to 14 days, and this legislation would allow 10 inpatient beds for stays of up to 60-90 days. The pilot would include the provision of evidence-based services, including psychiatric evaluations, integrated primary and behavioral health care, medication assisted treatment and more. Research collected by CHCS and its partners in the Southwest Texas Crisis Collaborative has shown that individuals who have longer stays in inpatient settings have better outcomes. The pilot program would be overseen by Southwest General Hospital and University of the Incarnate Word with a graduate medical residency program, which will help address the behavioral health workforce shortage in Texas. The estimated cost per bed per day would be \$827, a substantial savings from the cost of an estimated hospital readmission at \$1220. Thank you.

Printed on: April 22, 2021 10:43 PM

Susan Tharp

self & San Antonio Food Allergy Support Team

San Antonio, TX

FOR - HB 464

House Public Health Committee Members,

I hope you will review the documents that I already sent to your offices...

- San Antonio Food Allergy Support Team flyer about HB 464
- The "Keep Your Guests Safe" Restaurant free downloadable sample poster from Food Allergy Research & Education
- FARE's Talking Points: The Case for food Allergy Restaurant Legislation
- A letter of support from Dr. Han Wen, a professor at Univ. of North Texas, who has researched this topic for years.

Please support HB 464, the Sergio Lopez Allergy Awareness Act, in honor of Sergio Alexander Lopez, 24, who died in 2014 after eating a taco from a restaurant in McAllen, TX. (There was peanut butter in the mole sauce, although they told him it did not contain any peanuts.)

Increased awareness can prevent deaths! Requiring a simple awareness poster in restaurants could help increase safety.

Allergic reactions can become life-threatening quickly, even with just a trace amount of an allergen. It is crucial that restaurants understand the serious nature of food allergies, how to read labels, the importance of strict allergen avoidance and how to avoid cross contact during food preparation.

DID YOU KNOW...

- Food allergies affect up to 32 million Americans, including 1 in 13 children and 1 in 10 adults.
- More than half of fatal food allergy reactions are triggered by food consumed outside the home.
- There is no cure for food allergies - strict avoidance is the only way to prevent reactions.
- Reactions can progress very quickly. Past reactions do not predict the severity of future reactions.
- A reaction to food can range from a mild response to a severe and potentially deadly reaction.

There is no fiscal note for this bill. The only cost to restaurants would be to print and post the poster.

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN...

- According to a survey by the National Restaurant Association, 87% of restaurants believe food allergies are extremely important - yet 43% did not train their staff on food allergens.
- A 2016 report revealed the revenue lost from food allergy families avoiding restaurant dining is estimated at \$45 million per week.
- "Allergic reactions in restaurants are common and can be severe. Dining out accounted for the second most common location for a food allergic reaction, after one's home." 2020
- "We assessed restaurant workers' knowledge and practices regarding food allergy management and adverse events, which result in 90,000 emergency department visits annually in the US...No restaurant employee was able to name all seven "best practices" to reduce the risk of food allergy adverse events in restaurants. The majority of participants could name only zero or one..." 2016

Susan Tharp (food allergy mom)

San Antonio Food Allergy Support Team