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# The Times

## Medication switches put patients at risk

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As the mother of a daughter who has epilepsy, I know the daunting, life-long challenge of regulating this disorder. Before we found her current medication, she experienced as many as 300 seizures in a month. While she is not seizure-free, her prescribed anticonvulsant treatment has dramatically decreased the severity and number of seizures she experiences.

Several months ago, my daughter's prescribed anticonvulsant medication was switched by the pharmacy without the notification of my family or our physician. When my daughter's seizures began increasing in both length and frequency, we visited her neurologist, who quickly realized that her prescribed medication had been switched.

Even after I filed formal complaints, my daughter's medication was recently almost switched again. This is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. My daughter cannot continue to face the risk of her seizures increasing and intensifying because her medications are being substituted without notification.

This year, legislation was introduced in the form of the Patient Protection Bill, A3029 and S2071, to provide this vital protection. I am very disappointed that our state's Senate missed this opportunity to safeguard the more than 129,000 New Jerseyans living with epilepsy from the dangers posed by uninformed medication switches.

Pharmacists are required to seek permission from physicians before refilling prescriptions every day. Why wouldn't a pharmacist involve the patient and his or her doctor when making the decision to alter the sensitive and life-improving medications used to treat epilepsy?

-- ANNETTE SMITH, Newark

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