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For Immediate Release

## **New online program offers food allergy training for schools and daycare center staff**

NEW YORK – Belay, a company dedicated to finding solutions for the unmet needs of children and families affected by life-threatening food allergies, is announcing the launch of a new online training program for schools and daycare centers in New York State. The program, in partnership with The Elijah-Alavi Foundation, is the only food allergy training program accredited by the International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) and aims to make schools a safe environment for all children by preparing caretakers and educational institutions to be able to immediately and effectively respond to food allergy crises. The Belay program not only offers the gold standard in food allergy training, it supports and ensures that daycare and primary school staff are equipped with proper food allergy management plans, safety, and emergency preparedness plans, as well as posters, documentation, and technology that improves the safety for food-allergic children.

With the pandemic now more or less under control, daycare centers and schools are under pressure to ensure that by September they are in compliance with state-mandated school safety protocols. The Elijah Bill, signed by Governor Cuomo in September of 2019, mandates that all New York State child and daycare programs provide food allergy training for all staff and implement programs to prevent and effectively address anaphylactic emergencies. (Additional states such as Illinois and Pennsylvania will be enacting similar laws). That’s the law but are these protocols and allergy preparedness policies in place? Are staff properly trained in the event of an emergency? Can they recognize and identify the signs of an anaphylactic reaction?

*“In too many cases, the answer is no, not yet, but we can get there.”* according to Dr. Abby Herzig, a mother of a child with food allergies and the Co-Founder and CEO of Belay. *“This is a serious issue – one that could ultimately be the difference between life and death. It is urgent that these programs be in place. Parents expect nothing less.”* Belay’s training program and preparedness plan aims to mitigate the process by offering key tools and support needed to help schools transform themselves according to the newly-introduced regulations.

What happened to Elijah Silvera is a cautionary tale: In November of 2017, 3-year old Elijah was given a grilled cheese sandwich at his New York City daycare, despite having a known and documented life-threatening dairy allergy. Elijah went into anaphylactic shock. Staff didn’t respond in time. He was not given epinephrine immediately and he died in the hospital later that

day. Had the proper emergency protocol for anaphylaxis been followed, he would be alive today. *“A severe food-allergic reaction needs to get the same immediate attention as a heart attack or a drowning,”* says Thomas Silvera, Elijah’s father and Founder of the Elijah-Alavi Foundation. *“Elijah’s death was a tragedy, one that could have and should have easily been avoided.”*

Approximately 1 in 13 children have life-threatening food allergies. This translates to roughly 2 children in every class. Every day, parents send their children to class assuming that the right protocols are in place and that staff have the know-how to handle a severe allergic reaction. Given what happened to Elijah, that assumption is unfounded.

*“Everybody wants children to be safe and will do whatever they can to prevent an emergency. What happened to Elijah should never happen again, and we are looking forward to working with the growing number of childcare centers and schools looking to improve the safety of their facilities,”* Dr. Herzig says. *“Because the law now requires them to be prepared. Because parents of children with food allergies will expect it. And because the very lives of so many children depend on it.”*

To get ready for children returning to the classroom, Head Start/ PEACE, Inc. daycare programs in New York State’s Onondaga County as well as other schools and child-care centers throughout the country have signed up. Registration for the Belay training program is now open, which will be available online to all child-care centers and schools in New York State and across the country as of August 1.

To register or for more information, schools and daycare centers are encouraged to visit <https://webelay.com/training/>

### **Contact Information**

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### **About Belay**

Belay was founded to help families, daycares, and schools keep food-allergic children safe and to empower those around them with the necessary tools to be prepared for a food-allergic reaction. The company has been developing an ecosystem of both hardware and software to address the unmet needs of this growing health epidemic. For more information about Belay, please visit: <https://www.webelay.com>.

### **About The Elijah-Alavi Foundation**

The Elijah-Alavi Foundation was founded to ensure that all infants and children with severe food allergies and asthma have safe spaces to learn and socialize in daycare centers and schools. We intend to achieve this mission by partnering with a network of organizations and professionals to

provide the training, resources, and counsel for educators and school administrators to implement policies that reduce the risk of life-threatening allergic reactions in children. For more information about the Elijah-Alavi Foundation, please visit:

<https://www.elijahalavifoundation.org>.