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**NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION CONVENES
5th ANNUAL YOUTH SPORTS SAFETY SUMMIT**

"Rethinking youth athlete safety and need for a culture change"

WASHINGTON, March 10, 2014 – In its continued effort to address appropriate safety measures for youth athletes, the National Athletic Trainers' Association hosted today the fifth annual Youth Sports Safety Summit in Washington, D.C.

The event built upon the success of the NATA-founded Youth Sports Safety Alliance and its prior summits. The Alliance, comprising nearly 150 organizations, is committed to preventing catastrophic injury and illness in youth athletes. The program will culminate with visits to legislators on Capitol Hill on March 11.

"This year, we were all challenged to rethink student athlete safety from an accountability, liability, advocacy and best practice perspective," says NATA president Jim Thornton, MA, ATC, CES. "We are seeing a decline in youth sports participation due to safety concerns, while at the same time we know highly competitive athletes may not report injuries in order to stay in the game. Finding that right balance and culture shift was an integral part of this summit's dialogue and outcome," he said.

More than 7.7 million high school athletes participated in school sports during the 2012-2013 academic year with an estimated 46.5 million children playing team sports annually in the U.S. An estimated 1.35 million children were seen in an emergency department for sports-related injuries in 2012.

As a result of the National Action Plan for Sports Safety introduced at last year's Summit, Congress introduced House Resolution 72 (H. Res. 72), the Secondary School Student Athletes' Bill of Rights. It addresses the important rights of young athletes when participating in secondary school sports programs. The plan is an educational initiative to improve sports safety, achieve appropriate medical care in secondary schools, understand the potential risks, and at the same time, bring to light the many benefits of playing sports. Recently, a companion bill has been introduced in the Senate. S.Res. 372 hopes to accomplish the same goals as the House version.

To review the plan and Bill of Rights, please visit: <http://www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org/summits/national-sports-safety-action-plan>
<http://athletictrainers.org/about-us/secondary-school-student-athletes-bill-of-rights/>

Summit topics ranged from risk management for administrators to new research and recommendations on high school sports safety including concussions, pre-participation exams, mental health and the athlete and highlights of a new benchmark study that addressed appropriate medical care in today's secondary school setting. Afternoon discussions included athletic administration, as well as best practices in awareness and training; on the field; and advocacy. NATA advanced released a new position statement on the management of sport concussion that will be published in the March *Journal of Athletic Training*, NATA's scientific publication. To review the statement please visit: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-49.1.07>.

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“We’ve taken youth sports safety to a new level of awareness,” added Thornton. “Each participant is now empowered to share this important learning with the coaches, legislators, family members, school administrators, medical professionals and others who work with and influence our student athletes and can help ensure their physical and emotional health on the playing field.”

Nationally Acclaimed Speakers Address Trends, New Research and Liability Issues

The Summit, held at the Westin City Center Washington, DC, included a full program of presentations featuring some of the country’s leading youth sports safety medical experts and advocates. **Thornton** opened the program and was followed by **Brian Hainline, MD, chief medical officer, NCAA**, who addressed accountability and transparency in intercollegiate athletics. **Tom Farrey, director of the Aspen Institute’s Sports & Society Program** and an **ESPN enterprise reporter**, served as a school administration panel moderator. Other speakers included:

Steven Broglio, PhD, ATC, director, NeuroSport Research Laboratory, University of Michigan, highlighted a *new position statement on concussion management*; **Douglas J. Casa, PhD, ATC, FACSM, FNATA, Korey Stringer Institute, University of Connecticut**, provided an overview of the *adoption of guidelines and rules by state*; **Dawn Comstock, PhD, Colorado School of Public Health at University of Colorado, Denver**, discussed *recent research trends and scientific findings on the youth sports safety front*; **Timothy Liam Epstein, JD, partner, SmithAmundsen law firm**, addressed *liability and risk management*; **Neeru Jayanthi, MD, associate professor of Family Medicine and Orthopaedic Surgery & Rehabilitation, Loyola Stritch School of Medicine** and **board member, American Medical Society for Sports Medicine**, spoke about *preparticipation exams*; **Laura Long** and **Samantha Sanderson, co-founders, Concussion Connection**, offered the *athletes’ perspective*; **Timothy Neal, MS, ATC, assistant director of athletics for sports medicine, Syracuse University**, talked about *mental health and the athlete*; and **Riana Pryor, MS, ATC, director of research, Korey Stringer Institute**, addressed the *status of recent research of high school athletic training services*.

Case histories, additional speaker information or interviews are available upon request. For more information please visit: www.nata.org or www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org.

March is National Athletic Training Month with the theme “We’ve Got Your Back.”

About NATA: National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) – Health Care for Life & Sport

Athletic trainers are health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and sport-related illnesses. They prevent and treat chronic musculoskeletal injuries from sports, physical and occupational activity, and provide immediate care for acute injuries. Athletic trainers offer a continuum of care that is unparalleled in health care. The National Athletic Trainers’ Association represents and supports 39,000 members of the athletic training profession. Visit www.nata.org.

About the Youth Sports Safety Alliance:

Since 2010, the Youth Sports Safety Alliance has worked to raise awareness, advance legislation and improve medical care for young athletes across the country. High school athletes suffer 2 million injuries, 200,000 doctor visits and 30,000 hospitalizations every year. The alliance is committed to reducing those numbers and improving the health and safety of our young athletes. The YSSA was founded by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association and now includes nearly 150 member organizations. Visit: www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org.

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