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**YOUTH SPORTS SAFETY ALLIANCE
RELEASES FIRST-EVER NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SPORTS SAFETY**

Plan finalized at 4th Annual Youth Sports Safety Summit

WASHINGTON, February 6, 2013 – The Youth Sports Safety Alliance, composed of more than 100 organizations committed to keeping young athletes safe, launched the first-ever “National Action Plan for Sports Safety” to ensure comprehensive action to protect America’s student athletes. The Plan was finalized by those in attendance at the 4th annual Youth Sports Safety Summit in Washington, DC yesterday. The Summit was convened by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association.

“Our prior Summits provided the foundation for this National Action Plan – the critical next step that will help keep young athletes on the field and off the sidelines with chronic, catastrophic or fatal conditions,” said NATA President Jim Thornton, MA, ATC, CES. “These conditions can be largely prevented, managed and treated if the right protocols are in place, and properly trained medical personnel including athletic trainers are available to provide immediate care. Only 42 percent of U.S. secondary schools have access to athletic trainers.”

A Secondary School Student Athletes’ Bill of Rights was also formally released and reinforces the important rights of young athletes when participating in a secondary school sports program. It outlines essential elements that should be recognized by the athletes themselves, along with their parents, school and sports officials and policymakers at all levels.

To view the full Plan and Bill of Rights, please visit: <http://www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org/>

Attendees included select Alliance members as well as: health care professionals; parent advocate groups; education and school administration organizations; health care and sports associations; state and federal policymakers; athletic/activity associations; and sports governing bodies.

National Action Plan for Sports Safety Highlights

While concussion legislation has now passed in 43 states, the Plan addresses other leading health conditions and specifically urges schools to adopt safety measures to protect students from injury or illness that mainly occur in four major areas:

- Cardiac Events
- Neurologic Injuries
- Environmental/Exertional Conditions
- Dietary/Substance-Induced Conditions

The Plan requires that all schools:

- ✓ Have a comprehensive athletic health care program and a health care team.
- ✓ Assure safe practice and play facilities that are regularly inspected and cleaned.
- ✓ Provide an area in which injured athletes may be evaluated and treated and privacy of medical information is assured.
- ✓ Have a plan for selection, fit and maintenance of athletic equipment.
- ✓ Adopt injury and illness prevention strategies.
- ✓ Inform athletes and parents of potential risks in sports as well as individual responsibility.
- ✓ Assure that every student athlete has a pre-participation physical examination including cardiac and concussion testing where appropriate.
- ✓ Provide immediately available, properly trained health care professionals.
- ✓ Inform parents of the school's emergency policies and procedures.
- ✓ Provide automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in locations easily and immediately accessible; assure equipment is properly maintained and regularly inspected.
- ✓ Train coaches and athletic officials in CPR and use of AEDs.
- ✓ Adopt venue-specific emergency action plans (EAPs) routinely rehearsed with local emergency personnel.
- ✓ Make coaches, parents and student athletes aware of the potential problems related to the misuse of nutritional supplements, performance enhancement substances and energy drinks.
- ✓ Make school personnel aware of the psychosocial problems of student athletes and assure referral to qualified healthcare professionals as appropriate.
- ✓ Use established protocols for heat acclimatization, lightning, poor air quality and other environmental factors.

Nationally Acclaimed Speakers Address Trends, New Research and Liability Issues

The Summit, held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, began with a briefing featuring some of the country's leading youth sports safety medical experts and advocates. In addition to Thornton, who opened the program, the speakers included:

Douglas J. Casa, PhD, ATC, FACSM, FNATA, Korey Stringer Institute, University of Connecticut, provided an overview of the *Preventing Sudden Death in High School Athletics inter-association task force*; **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*; **Charles Gfeller, Esq.** addressed *risk management for schools and recommended sports safety protocols*; **Kevin Guskiewicz, PhD, ATC, Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**, addressed *the changing culture of play*; **Beth Mallon, Advocates for Injured Athletes and Alliance representative**, highlighted the *Alliance's history and evolution, as well as collective successes*; and **Chris Nowinski, Sports Legacy Institute**, talked about *his experience with and perspective on concussions*.

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

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 35,000 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 over 100 member organizations. Visit: www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org.

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