



August 30, 2010

Marjorie Albohm, MS, ATC
President
NATA
2952 Stemmons Freeway, #200
Dallas, TX 75247

Dear Ms. Albohm,

The Korey Stringer Institute is pleased to join the National Athletic Trainers' Association and other health care and medical associations looking to advance youth sports safety.

The Korey Stringer Institute was officially opened in April 2010 in honor of the late Korey Stringer. In August 2001 Korey Stringer, a Minnesota Vikings offensive lineman, died from exertional heat stroke. During Korey's five-year tenure in the NFL, he earned pro-bowl honors. Since the time of Korey's death, Korey's wife, Kelci Stringer, has worked tirelessly to develop a heat stroke prevention institute to honor her husband's legacy. Kelci came to me due to my assistance as an expert witness during legal proceedings in her husband's trial. She has asked me to join forces with her to make this dream a reality. My current position at UConn's Department of Kinesiology within the Neag School of Education has a strong tradition and reputation as one of the leading institutions studying heat and hydration issues related to athletes and the physically active. KSI is partnered with the National Football League (NFL) and Gatorade to further advance its efforts and goals.


The mission of the Korey Stringer Institute (KSI) is to provide first-rate information, resources, assistance and advocacy for the prevention of sudden death in sport, especially as it relates to exertional heat stroke. KSI serves the needs of active people and athletes at all levels – youth, high school, college, professional and recreational athletes – people who are physically active, and those who supervise and care for these individuals. Components of these services include: consultations, advocacy, education, research, change grants, and mass-market outreach. KSI has already helped to serve NASA, the NATA, the CDC, the NCAA and other schools and universities while also providing one of the most extensive heat illness resources on the web.

Since 1975, the past 5-year block (2004-2009) has the highest number of deaths from exertional heat stroke than any other 5-year block. The number of deaths during this time is so high that it has over twice the number of deaths than the 5-year block average. This makes exertional heat stroke one of the leading causes of sudden death in sport. During certain times of the year, it is likely the leading cause of death. Many cases of exertional heat stroke could be prevented if strategies to enhance the health and safety of athletes were improved to focus on hydration, phase-in programs for heat acclimatization, access to on-site medical care, etc. When an exertional heat stroke does occur – because not all cases could ever be prevented within the confines of athletes performing intense exercise in the heat – proper recognition, treatment and emergency action plans need to be in place to assure athlete survival.

The crux of the problem is that current polices for decreasing the incidence of exertional heat illness are extremely ineffective, and the potential for inappropriate care continues to be a large threat. The Korey Stringer Institute strives to help resolve these problems.

The Korey Stringer Institute is strongly vested in pushing for changes that will continue to protect the lives of youth athletes. We are excited to join this alliance and will work assiduously to fight for the health and safety of youth athletes.

Sincerely,


Douglas J. Casa, PhD, ATC, FACSM, FNATA
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