



Feb. 10, 2010

We are proud to support the efforts of the National Athletic Trainers' Association to address the issue of youth safety in sports-related activities. By forming the Alliance to Address the Youth Sports Safety Crisis in America, the NATA will bring into focus the need for additional attention and action required to keep our youth safe.

The CDC estimates that approximately 3.8 million recreational and sports-related concussions occur each year in the U.S. Of those, only a small fraction of patients are transported to a hospital emergency room, and an unknown number are treated by independent physicians. It is feared that the majority of youth concussions are both unreported and untreated.

Strong evidence exists that continuing to play while experiencing symptoms from a previous concussion, can result in catastrophic outcomes. Engaging in physical and cognitive activity before an athlete's brain has fully healed can also prolong recovery. There are many stories of student-athletes who appear uninjured, but are in fact, continuing to suffer the consequences of a concussion for weeks or years after their injury. Persistent headaches, dizziness, or debilitating fatigue make studying difficult and affect GPAs, college plans, and everything else in these young lives.

Many states are now addressing the problem through legislation modeled after WA State's Lystedt Law. This law requires, among other things, an athlete to obtain written medical authorization to return to the playing field. Certified athletic trainers can provide that authorization, and play a vital role in the diagnosis and subsequent management of athletes with concussions. We believe that every high school should employ a licensed, certified athletic trainer for their athletes' safety.

SportsConcussions.org provides education and increased awareness of the concussion issue via our website, which is updated daily with research information, interviews with experts, personal stories from injured athletes, current news, and events. We also hold community and professional concussion workshops and provide links to CDC materials for individuals or teams to order. We look forward to assisting the Alliance in their endeavors to improve youth safety.

Sincerely yours,

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