



State Concussion Laws Overview (July 27, 2011)

As of this writing, thirty states have enacted youth sports concussion-related laws. This memo is intended to provide an overview of these existing state laws.

Alabama *Signed into law by the governor on June 9, 2011 (Chapter 541)

- **HB 108** requires that youth athletes and their parents must be educated about the nature of concussion and brain injury. On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet must be signed and returned by the youth athlete and his/her parent prior to starting the sports season.
- Coaches must receive annual training to learn how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion and how to seek proper medical treatment for a person suspected of having a concussion.
- A youth athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or brain injury in practice or a game must immediately be removed from play and cannot return to play until a written clearance is received from a licensed physician.

Alaska *Signed into law by the governor on May 27, 2011 (Chapter 12 SLA 11)

- **HB 15** requires that guidelines be developed to address the nature and risks of concussions.
- Education of coaches, student athletes and parents of student athletes is also required. Each school must annually provide to the student and his/her parent/guardian written information about concussion prevention practices. Signed verification of the information is required for a student to participate in school athletic activities.
- A student who is suspected of sustaining a concussion during a practice or game must immediately be removed from play. He/she cannot return to play until he/she is cleared for participation by a qualified medical professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

Arizona *Signed into law by the governor on April 18, 2011 (Chapter 167)

- **SB 1521** requires the development of guidelines, forms and information to educate about concussion prevention.
- Parents of students who participate in school athletics must sign an annual information form that sates their awareness of the dangers of concussions.
- A student must be removed from an athletic event, practice or other interscholastic athletic activity if the student is suspected of having sustained a concussion. A coach, official, licensed healthcare provider or parent from the student's team is allowed to remove a student athlete from play if a concussion is suspected. A student athlete may return to play the same day if a licensed health care provider rules out a suspected concussion at the time of the student's removal; a student may return to play on a subsequent day only with written permission from a licensed health care provider.

Colorado *Signed into law by the governor on March 29, 2011 (Chapter TBD)

- **SB 40** requires that youth sports coaches receive training in the nature and risk of concussions, including education on identifying the signs and symptoms that a student athlete has suffered a concussion.
- Coaches who suspect that a youth athlete has sustained a concussion must remove the child from the game, competition or practice. The youth athlete cannot return to play the same day unless the signs and symptoms of a concussion can be readily explained by another condition.
- A youth athlete removed from play due to a concussion or suspected concussion must be evaluated by a health care provider and receive written clearance before participating in sports again.

Connecticut *Signed into law by the governor on May 18, 2010 (Public Act No. 10-62)

- **SB 456** requires the Board of Education to develop a concussion and head injury training course and refresher course.
- Intramural and interscholastic coaches who hold coaching permits from the state Board of Education would be required to complete an initial concussion and head injury training course and then a refresher course every five years.
- Intramural and interscholastic coaches must immediately remove a student athlete diagnosed with a concussion or observed exhibiting signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion.
- A student athlete removed from play may not participate in supervised team activities without a written clearance from a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

Idaho *Signed into law by the governor on April 11, 2010 (Chapter 294)

- **HB 676** requires the state Board of Education to develop guidelines and information to educate coaches, youth athletes, and parents/guardians about the nature and risk of concussions and head injury.
- The guidelines and information must be made available online and may be used by all organized youth sport organizations or associations in the state.

Indiana *Signed into law by the governor on May 10, 2011 (Chapter 144)

- **SB 93** requires the state Department of Education to disseminate guidelines, information sheets and forms to schools for distribution to coaches, student athletes and parents of student athletes on the nature and risk of concussions and head injuries.
- A high school student athlete and the student athlete's parent must be given information concerning head injuries and concussions and return a form acknowledging receipt of the information to the student athlete's coach each year before beginning practice for a sport.
- A high school student athlete who is suspected of sustaining a head injury or concussion must be removed from play at the time of the injury. It provides that the student athlete may not return to play until the student athlete has been evaluated and received written clearance from a licensed health care provider trained in evaluating head injuries.

Iowa *Signed into law by the governor on April 7, 2010 (Chapter TBD)

- **SB 367** requires the Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union to work together to distribute CDC guidelines and other important information to educate coaches, students and parents/guardians of the risks, signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury, including the danger of continuing to participate in extracurricular interscholastic activities after suffering a concussion or brain injury and their responsibility to report such signs, symptoms, and behaviors if they occur.
- Annually, each school district and nonpublic school must provide to the parent or guardian of each student a concussion and brain injury information sheet for their signature. The sheet must be returned to the student's school prior to the student's participation in any extracurricular interscholastic activity for grades seven through twelve.
- If a student's coach or contest official observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury in an extracurricular interscholastic activity, the student shall be immediately removed from participation. A student must be evaluated and receive a written clearance by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other brain injuries before returning to play. A "licensed health care provider" means a physician, physician assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist, or athletic trainer licensed by a board.

Kansas *Signed into law by the governor on May 25, 2011 (Chapter TBD)

- **SB 33** requires the state Board of Education and the Kansas State High School Activities Association to compile information on the nature and risks of concussion and head injury, including the dangers of playing and practicing with a concussion or head injury. The information must be provided to school districts for distribution to coaches, school athletes and the parents/guardians of the school athletes.
- A school athlete may not participate in any sport competition or practice session unless the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian have signed, and returned to the school, a concussion and head injury information release form. A release form shall be signed and returned each school year that a student athlete participates in sport competitions or practice sessions.
- If a school athlete suffers, or is suspected of having suffered, a concussion or head injury during a sport competition or practice session, the school athlete immediately shall be removed from the sport competition or practice session. He/she can only return to play after being evaluated by a health care provider and the health care provider provides such athlete a written clearance to return to play or practice.

Louisiana *Signed into law by the governor on June 28, 2011 (Act 314)

- **SB 189** requires public and private elementary schools, middle schools, junior high schools and high schools to provide concussion information to all coaches, officials, volunteers, youth athletes and their parents or legal guardians.
- Each coach (employed or a volunteer) and each official of a youth athletic activity that involves interscholastic play must complete an annual concussion recognition course.
- A youth athlete and the youth athlete's parents or legal guardian must sign a concussion and head injury information sheet.
- A coach must remove from play a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion; written clearance by a medical professional is required before the youth athlete can resume athletic activities.

Maryland *Signed into law by the governor on May 19, 2011 (Chapter 548)

- **SB 771** requires the Department of Education to develop policies and implement a program to provide awareness about concussion to coaches, school personnel, students and parents.
- In addition, removal from play guidelines are specified in cases of suspected concussions. Students can only return to play if cleared by a licensed health care provider who is trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

Massachusetts *Signed into law by the governor on July 19, 2010 (Chapter 166)

- **S 2469** establishes a head injury safety training program to be completed by coaches, trainers, volunteers, school physicians, and parents/guardians of students participating in extracurricular athletic activities. The program must include training in recognizing the symptoms of potentially catastrophic head and neck injuries, concussions, and injuries related to second impact syndrome.
- School districts must provide students participating in extracurricular athletic activities with information related to head injuries, including the biology and short-term and long-term consequences of concussions.
- Students and parents/guardians would be required to sign injury history forms prior to participating in extracurricular activities.
- If a student participating in an extracurricular athletic activity (practice or competition) becomes unconscious or suffers a concussion as diagnosed by a medical professional, the student may not return to play or participate in any extracurricular athletic activities until the student receives written authorization from a physician.

Minnesota *Signed into law by the governor on May 27, 2011 (Chapter 90)

- **SF 612** requires organizations that organizes and charges a fee for youth athletic activities to provide information about concussions to coaches, officials, youth athletes and parents; require all coaches and officials to receive annual concussion training; and require the youth athlete and their parent or guardian to sign a concussion information form before participating in the athletic activity.
- A coach or official must to remove a youth athlete from the athletic activity if the youth athlete exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or is suspected of sustaining a concussion. The youth athlete can return to play once he/she is evaluated by a trained provider and the provider gives them written permission to return to the activity; and the provider develops a plan to aid the youth athlete in recovering and resuming participation in athletic activities and academics that is coordinated with periods of cognitive and physical rest while symptoms persist; and reintroduces cognitive and physical demands on the young person on a progressive basis only.

Missouri *Signed into law by the governor on July 13, 2011

- **HB 300** establishes the *Youth Sports Brain Injury Prevention Act*, which requires the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to develop guidelines on the risk of concussion and brain injury.
- Coaches, parents and athletes are required to receive education annually regarding concussions.
- An athlete who appears to have sustained a concussion is to be immediately removed from play or practice. The athlete is not allowed to return for a minimum of 24 hours.
- A licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions must provide clearance for the athlete to return to play or practice.

Nebraska *Signed into law by the governor on April 14, 2011 (Chapter TBD)

- LB 260 requires public, private, denominational, or parochial schools to offer trainings on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or brain injury and how to seek proper medical treatment for a concussion or brain injury to all coaches of school athletic teams.
- Concussion and brain injury information must also be provided on an annual basis to students and the students' parents or guardians prior to such students initiating practice or competition. The information provided to students and the students' parents or guardians shall include, but not limited to, the following: the signs and symptoms of a concussion; the risks posed by sustaining a concussion; and the actions a student should take in response to sustaining a concussion, including the notification of his or her coaches.
- A student who participates on a school athletic team must be removed from a practice or game when he or she is reasonably suspected of having sustained a concussion or brain injury in such practice or game after observation by a coach or a licensed health care professional who is professionally affiliated with or contracted by the school. In order to return to play, the student must be evaluated by a licensed health care professional, has received written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from the licensed health care professional, and has submitted the written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities to the school accompanied by written permission to resume participation from the student's parent or guardian.
- If an athlete is reasonably suspected after observation of having sustained a concussion or brain injury and is removed from play, the parent or guardian of the athlete shall be notified by the coach or a representative of the city, village, business, or nonprofit organization that organized the athletic activity of the date and approximate time of the injury suffered by the athlete, the signs and symptoms of a concussion or brain injury that were observed, and any actions taken to treat the athlete.

Nevada *Signed into law by the governor on May 31, 2011 (Chapter 170)

- **AB 455** requires the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association to adopt a policy concerning the prevention and treatment of head injuries and concussions. The policy must require that a pupil who sustains or is suspected of sustaining an injury to the head while participating in such an activity or event: (1) be immediately removed from the activity or event; and (2) may not return to the activity or event unless the parent or legal guardian of the pupil provides a written statement from a provider of health care indicating that the pupil is medically cleared to participate and the date on which the pupil may return to the activity or event.
- A pupil who participates in interscholastic activities and events and his or her parent or legal guardian must sign a form acknowledging that they have received a copy of the policy and understand its terms and conditions before the pupil's participation in the activity or event and must sign the form on an annual basis.

New Jersey *Signed into law by the governor on December 7, 2010 (Chapter 94)

- **A 2743** requires the state Department of Education to develop an athletic head injury safety training program for public and private school districts. The safety training program would address the recognition of the symptoms of head and neck injuries; the appropriate amount of time that a student-athlete must wait before returning to play after sustaining an injury; and properly training school physicians, coaches and athletic trainers on concussion identification and treatment procedures.
- Student-athletes who show signs of a concussion will also need to be removed from play, and can only return to play after a medical clearance.

New Mexico *Signed into law by the governor on March 9, 2010 (Chapter 96)

- **SB 1** requires coaches to remove student athletes suspected of sustaining a brain injury from play.
- Student athletes who have sustained brain injuries would be prohibited from participating in school athletic activities for at least one week and would have to obtain a medical release from a licensed health care professional.
- The state activities association must develop a brain injury training program for coaches. School districts must ensure coaches receive the training.
- The state activities association must also develop brain injury information forms and educational materials for coaches, student athletes, and parents/guardians on the nature and risk of brain injury resulting from athletic activity, including the risks associated with continuing to play with a brain injury.
- At the beginning of each academic year, the student athlete and his or her parent/guardian must sign the brain injury information form and return it to the school district.

North Carolina *Signed into law by the governor on June 16, 2011 (Chapter 147)

- **HB 792** requires the Matthew A. Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center at UNC-Chapel Hill in consultation with the North Carolina Medical Society, the North Carolina Athletic Trainers Association, the Brain Injury Association of North Carolina, the North Carolina Neuropsychological Society, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, Inc., and the Department of Public Instruction to develop an athletic concussion safety training program. The program shall be developed for the use of coaches, school nurses, school athletic directors, volunteers, students who participate in interscholastic athletic activities in the public schools, and the parents of these students.
- The training program must include: written information detailing the recognition of the signs and symptoms of concussions and other head injuries; a description of the physiology and the potential short-term and long-term effects of concussions and other head injuries; and the medical return-to-play protocol for postconcussion participation in interscholastic athletic activities.

- All middle schools and high schools must provide a concussion and head injury information sheet on an annual basis to all coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders, volunteers, students who participate in interscholastic athletic activities, and the parents of those students. School employees, first responders, volunteers, and students must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before they can participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including tryouts, practices, or competition. Parents must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before their children can participate in any such interscholastic athletic activities.
- If a student participating in an interscholastic athletic activity exhibits signs or symptoms consistent with concussion, the student must be removed from the activity at that time and shall not be allowed to return to play or practice that day. The student cannot return to play or practice on a subsequent day until the student is evaluated by and receives written clearance for such participation from a physician with training in concussion management, a neuropsychologist with training in concussion management and working in consultation with a physician, an athletic trainer, a physician assistant or a nurse practitioner.

North Dakota **Signed into law by the governor on April 22, 2011 (Chapter TBD)*

- **SB 2281** requires that each school district and nonpublic school must execute a concussion management program. The program must require that the official remove a student from competition and that a student's coach or a student's athletic trainer must remove the student from practice, training, or competition if there is a sign of a concussion or the official, coach or athletic trainer determines that a student has a symptom of concussion. The student must be examined as soon as practical by a licensed health provider who is trained in the treatment of concussions. He/she cannot return to play until there is a written clearance from a licensed health care provider with a concussion management background.
- Each official, coach, and athletic trainer receive biennial training regarding the nature and risk of concussion.

Oklahoma **Signed into law by the governor on May 13, 2010*

- **SB 1700** requires that each school district develop guidelines and other information to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes, and parents/guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including the risks associated with continuing to play after sustaining a concussion or head injury.
- A youth athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during a practice or game must be removed from participation and may not return to play until evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and obtaining written clearance from the health care provider.

Oregon **Signed into law by the governor on June 18, 2009 (Chapter 661)*

- Under **SB 348**, school coaches are required to receive annual training to learn how to recognize the symptoms of concussion and how to seek proper medical treatment for athletes suspected of having a concussion.
- Coaches are not permitted to allow athletes to participate in practice or events while they exhibit signs or symptoms of concussion or have been diagnosed with a concussion.
- Athletes must no longer exhibit signs or symptoms and have a medical release from a health care professional before returning to play.

Rhode Island **Signed into law by the governor on June 9, 2010 (Chapter 21)*

- **S 2034** requires each school district to develop guidelines and information for student athletes, parents/guardians, and coaches to educate them about the risk of concussion and head injury.
- A concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by the student athlete and the athlete's parent/guardian.
- A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in practice or a game must be removed from play and cannot return until evaluated by a licensed physician and obtaining written clearance to return to play from that licensed physician.

South Dakota **Signed into law by the governor on March 17, 2011 (Chapter TBD)*

- **SB 149** requires the development of guidelines that are designed to educate schools, coaches, athletes and their parents about the nature and risk of concussions, including continuing to play after such an injury.
- A concussion information sheet must be signed and returned each academic year by any student athlete and his/her parent.
- A student athlete who was removed from play due to sustaining a concussion can only resume athletic participation if he/she no longer has symptoms and has written clearance from a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation of concussions.

Texas **Signed into law by the governor on June 15, 2007 (Chapter 1296)*

- **SB 82** requires the development and adoption of a safety training course by the Commissioner of Education. Coaches and trainers for extracurricular athletics must complete the safety training program, which should address identification of concussion symptoms of concussions (among other provisions).

Utah *Signed into law by the governor on March 21, 2011 (Chapter TBD)

- Effective on May 10, 2011, **HB 204**, the *Protection of Athletes with Head Injuries Act*, requires a child to be immediately removed from participating in a sporting event if a concussion is suspected.
- The child must also receive a medical clearance before returning to play.
- All amateur sports organizations (including public and private schools and sports camps) must adopt a policy that ensures concussion awareness education for coaches, teachers, and parents.

Vermont *Signed into law by the governor on May 31, 2011 (Act 58)

- **S 100** requires education of coaches, youth athletes and their parents/guardians about the nature and risk of concussions and requires them to sign a concussion information form.
- A youth athlete with a concussion must be cleared by a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions before returning to play or practice.

Virginia *Signed into law by the governor on April 11, 2010 (Chapter 483)

- **SB 652** requires the state Department of Education to work with stakeholders to develop policies to inform and educate coaches, student-athletes, and their parents/guardians on the nature and risk of concussions, criteria for return to play, and risks of not reporting an injury and continuing to play.
- On an annual basis, each school district shall provide student athletes with information on concussions and each student athlete and the student athlete's parent/guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of the information.
- Each school district must develop policies for handling student-athlete concussions, including requiring athletes suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury to be removed from play until evaluated by a licensed health care provider.
- The athlete must obtain written clearance to return to play from the health care provider.

Washington *Signed into law by the governor on May 14, 2009 (Chapter 475)

- **HB 1824** requires that each school district must develop guidelines and information to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes, and their parents and/or guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including continuing to play after concussion or head injury.
- On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete and the athlete's parent and/or guardian prior to participation in practice or competition.
- A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game must be removed from play.

- A youth athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.
- The athlete must obtain written clearance to return to play from the health care provider.

Wyoming *Signed into law by the governor on March 10, 2011 (Chapter 190)

- **SF 38** requires the state Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a model protocol and to assist school districts in developing protocols for addressing risks associated with concussions and other head injuries from school athletics.
- School districts are also required to adopt protocols to address risks associated with concussion and other head injuries, including providing training to coaches and trainers, restricting a student's participation in sports after suffering a concussion or head injury, and distributing educational information to students and parents.