



State Concussion Laws Overview (March 29, 2011)

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.