



University of Michigan
C.S. Mott Children's Hospital

Pediatric Trauma Program
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Testimony to the Michigan House Health Policy Committee regarding H.B. 5697 (Sports Concussion Bill)

Good morning Chairperson Haines and members of the Michigan Health Policy Committee. I am honored to have the opportunity to speak with you today about a very important health and safety issue for youth across our state.

My name is Amy Teddy, Injury Prevention Program Manager at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital at the University of Michigan - a Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center that cares for the most seriously injured children.

Every year, nearly 500 children are admitted to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital as a result of a serious injury. Another 6,500 are treated for an injury in our Pediatric Emergency Department. My job, within the Pediatric Trauma Program, is to develop interventions to prevent the leading cause of death and disability among children - injuries.

THE PROBLEM

Sports-related injuries are the third leading cause of trauma-related admissions at Mott. Many of these cases involve concussion. In addition to these admissions, many more young athletes are treated in our Emergency Department and in our NeuroSport (Concussion) Clinic.

When concussions are not properly recognized and/or an athlete is returned to play too soon, the consequences may include a prolonged recovery, extended concussion symptoms, permanent brain damage or even death.

There is a tremendous amount of public concern surrounding the possible long-term effects from concussion. This is especially true for our pediatric population. Young athletes may be at greater risk and may take longer to recover from a concussion, when compared to older athletes, due to their ongoing brain development.

It is important to note that these are student athletes. Brain injuries, like concussion, can and will affect their academic performance. And, if not handled properly, could impact their future.

EDUCATION

Our philosophy is that it takes a team to keep concussions on the sidelines. Coaches, teammates and parents all have a role in protecting athletes from further injury. Preventing serious and long-term injury is more about recognizing the injury when it occurs, removing the athlete from participation, and allowing them to recover before returning - all aspects that can be addressed through effective educational efforts.

There is concern for the lack of understanding among coaches, parents and athletes when it comes to concussion. Although we have seen a significant rise in reported concussions in recent years, there continues to be a gap in understanding how to properly recognize, respond and recover from a concussion. Patients from all over Michigan seek the expert care at our facilities. Every day a patient will share a concerning story of how their concussion was not appropriately recognized, sometimes not reported, and this ultimately led to

a mismanagement of the injury. Many of these cases were preventable had someone, a coach, the athlete themselves, parents, or the healthcare provider, been properly educated.

My experience with educating coaches and parents across Michigan for the past four years allows me to have a credible pulse on their concerns, frustrations and misconceptions about concussions. They don't know what they don't know. The health and safety of their athletes is a priority; however, they have not received the education they need to be successful and prevent a potentially devastating injury to one of their student athletes. Misinformation, media stories and concerned members of their communities have continued to be their source of education. This mechanism for education is not effective. We can have the toughest concussion policy on the planet but unless those responsible for implementing the policy are properly educated we cannot expect it to be successful.

We have been educating those on the frontline of youth athletics since 2008. To expand our reach and commitment to the most up-to-date information, we developed a series of online concussion education modules: 1) Youth Coach 2) High School Coach and 3) Parent – all endorsed by the American Academy of Neurology in September 2011. During the summer of 2012, we were honored to partner with the Michigan High School Athletic Association and integrate our High School Coach version into their annual training for all sports. We are proud to be a leader in concussion education.

SUMMARY

We are pleased to see the health and safety of our young athletes acknowledged through this bill. We believe that education is the key component to proper management of concussion and preventing a catastrophic injury. We support efforts to provide quality education to those on the frontline of youth athletics. Every parent deserves the peace of mind that their child's coach is armed with accurate and up-to-date concussion education. Coaches deserve the proper training to help them protect the health and safety of their athletes. And athletes deserve the proper education necessary to make informed decisions about their health and safety. This approach will help keep concussions on the sidelines in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Amy Teddy
Injury Prevention Program Manager
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