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Michigan Launches Educational Website for Sports Concussions

LANSING – Michigan recently became the 39th U.S. state to enact a law that regulates sports concussions and return to athletic activity. While the law goes into full effect on June 30, 2013, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has launched a website with resources for coaches, parents, and athletes with educational resources and online training courses from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "Head's Up" Program.

"Concussions are a very serious injury that can change a young athlete's life forever" said James K. Haveman, Director of the MDCH. "With more awareness about the signs, symptoms and consequences of concussions and prompt removal from play when a concussion is suspected, this law will help to preserve future health and academic performance of student athletes."

A concussion is a serious brain injury, caused by a blow, bump or jolt to the head. It can occur in any sport or recreational activity. According to the CDC, each year U.S. emergency departments treat an estimated 173,285 sports and recreation-related concussions among children and adolescents, with the highest number of injuries occurring in boy's football and girls' soccer.

The MDCH website communicates the details of the law and how to comply with it. Michigan's sports concussion law requires that all organizing entities that sponsor an athletic activity (including any game, competition or practice) to ensure that all coaches, employees, volunteers, or other involved adults, participate in a concussion awareness training program and to provide educational resources on the signs, symptoms and consequences of sports concussions to parents, athletes and volunteers. Parents and athletes will be required to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of educational materials, which is to be kept on file by the organizing entity.

If a concussion is suspected, the athlete is to be immediately removed from the athletic activity and shall not return to play until they have received written clearance from an appropriate health professional. Medical clearance should only be provided after a graduated return to play plan has been completed and the youth athlete has been symptom free at all stages.

"The State of Michigan hopes with more education and immediate action, we together can prevent the life changing effects that can result from a sports concussion," said Haveman.

For more information about the Michigan sports concussion law and to see the educational and training tools available from the CDC's "Heads Up" Program, visit www.michigan.gov/sportsconcussion. For parents, coaches, or athletes looking to join the conversation about brain injury awareness, visit www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp.

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