

Youth Sports Program Concussion Awareness Legislation

Effective July 1, 2011, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation (HB858/SB 771) requiring concussion awareness and management for organized youth sports programs at public school sites and local parks. This bill requires that concussion awareness information be provided to coaches, school personnel, students and parents/guardians, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, local boards of education, and other experts and stakeholders.

SUMMARY OF MARYLAND HB 858 AND SB 771

Education – Public Schools and Youth Sports Programs – Concussions

- This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop policies and implement a program to provide concussion awareness to coaches, school personnel, students, and parents, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), local boards of education, and other experts and stakeholders. A student or youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury in practice or game must be removed from play. Once removed from play, a student or youth athlete may not return to play until he or she has obtained written clearance from a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.
- The concussion awareness program developed by MSDE must promote awareness on the nature and risk of a concussion or head injury, criteria for removal from and return to play, risks of not reporting injury and continuing to play, and appropriate academic accommodations for students diagnosed with concussions or head injuries. The program must include a process to verify that a coach has received information relating to the program.
- Before a student enrolled in a public school system in Maryland may participate in an authorized interscholastic athletic activity, a local board must provide a concussion and head injury information sheet to the student and the student's parent or guardian; both must acknowledge the receipt of this sheet by signing a statement. MSDE must create the information sheet and the acknowledgement statement.
- Before an individual participates in an authorized athletic activity on school property, a local board must provide, or require a third party to provide, information on concussions and head injuries to the individual and, if applicable, a parent or guardian. The individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian, must acknowledge receipt of the information and return the acknowledgement to the local board or third party.
- A youth sports program that uses a public school facility must annually provide to the local board (or the board's agent), a statement of intent to comply with the bill's requirements for the management of a concussion or other head injury of a participant. A youth sports program must also make the information on concussions and head injuries developed by MSDE available to coaches, youth athletes, and parents and guardians. A coach must review the information.
- Before a youth sports program may use a facility owned or operated by a local government, the local government must provide notice to the youth sports program of the requirements of the bill.
- The term "youth sports program" is defined as a program organized for recreational athletic competition or instruction for participants who are under the age of 19 years.
- The bill takes effect July 1, 2011.
- For more information regarding concussions, please call 800-232-4636 or go to www.cdc.gov/concussioninyouthsports.

The staff at Parks and Recreation is happy to assist youth sport organizations in implementing a concussion awareness program in order to comply with legislation requirements. For more information call 410-778-1948 or email info@KentParksAndRec.org.

For information and materials for use for youth sports programs, please visit the Center for Disease Control website <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>.