



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

TO: Athletic Directors, Coaches, Athletic Trainers, School Nurses and Physicians, Superintendents and Principals

FROM: John Auerbach, Commissioner
Department of Public Health

RE: New Law on Sports-Related Head Injuries

DATE: August 27, 2010

In order to promote the safety and wellbeing of young athletes in Massachusetts, Governor Deval L. Patrick recently signed a law requiring all public schools and other schools that are members of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) to participate in a mandatory sports head injury and concussion awareness program beginning with the 2010-11 school year. The law also directs the Department to develop regulations to implement the policies specified in the law including: educating athletes and their parents about concussions, the documentation of student athlete's past head injuries, requirements for taking a student athlete out of play or practice, and certification for "return to play".

The planning and regulatory process to implement this law is likely to take several months to complete. The Department of Public Health will be working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, the Massachusetts Medical Society, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Athletic Trainers of Massachusetts, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, and the Sports Legacy Institute to develop these regulations. In addition, we will also have a process to solicit your comments and input before the end of the calendar year. In the interim, we have identified 2 on-line training courses that will assist in complying with the requirement to participate in a concussion awareness program. We have also developed the attached fact sheet that describes the requirements of the law and provides links to additional educational resources and guidance, including the Center for Disease Control's *Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports* initiative. These materials include fact sheets you can use to educate your athletes and their parents.

On behalf of the Department of Public Health, I would like to thank you for your help in implementing this important legislation and look forward to working with you as we continue to protect our student athletes.