



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes Concussion Management Awareness Act

DEAN G. SKELOS June 13, 2011

The New York State Senate today passed the Concussion Management Awareness Act, sponsored by Senator Kemp Hannon (R, C, I, - Garden City), Chairman of the Senate Health Committee, that would direct the State Health and Education Departments to adopt rules and regulations for the treatment and monitoring of students with mild traumatic brain injuries.

“The number of children each year who suffer brain injuries, such as concussions, is alarming,” Senator Hannon said. “New York needs legislation to outline rules and regulations for the treatment and monitoring of students with mild traumatic brain injuries, and that’s exactly what my legislation provides.”

The bill (S.3953), sponsored by Senator Hannon and Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan would direct the State Education Department, in consultation with the State Health Department, to adopt rules and regulations for the recognition and monitoring of concussions in students. The bill establishes minimum guidelines regarding removal from play, physician clearance, and “return to play” protocols.

“Several legislators have had a long term interest in head concussion guidelines for student athletes,” said Assemblywoman Nolan. “I am delighted that we have come together on a proposal to ensure the safety of student athletes.”

The legislation allows for a concussion management team in each school district that would be comprised of health professionals, sports staff, and appropriate personnel. The concussion management team would be responsible for overseeing staff training, educating parents and students about concussions, and helping transition students who have sustained a concussion back into school and sports within specified guidelines.

“By instituting these regulations, school personnel will be able to more easily identify concussions and thereby reduce the risk of long-term complications in our young people,” Hannon said. “This legislation will encourage parents, students and coaches to take preventative steps to avoid such significant injuries.”

Nina Van Erk, Executive Director of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association said, “The New York State Public High School Athletic Association applauds the efforts of the Legislature in addressing this serious health concern. It is imperative that school personnel have the tools to recognize the symptoms of mild traumatic brain injuries. Through the generous support of Senator Hannon, the association has been able to work with our member schools to successfully implement a comprehensive concussion

management program, which includes local concussion management teams and 'return to play' protocols, thus helping to minimize the risk of head injuries to both student athletes and non-athletes. We thank Senator Hannon and Assemblywoman Nolan for their strong leadership on this issue."

Jeff Miller, NFL Senior Vice President said, "The NFL is pleased to support Senator Hannon and Assemblywoman Nolan's Concussion Management Awareness Act and encourage its immediate adoption. When passed into law, this bill will protect New York's young student-athletes from preventable concussions and other brain injuries."

Judith I. Avner, Executive Director of Brain Injury Association of New York State said, "A concussion is more than a bump on the head and can have serious consequences. You can't see a concussion, but its impact may be lifelong. An undiagnosed concussion can affect a student's abilities at school and in everyday activities. This legislation takes important steps to protect our student athletes by assuring that any student suspected of having sustained a concussion is protected. The Brain Injury Association of New York State is pleased to partner with Senator Hannon and Assemblywoman Nolan on this critically important issue. The safety of our children is too important to leave to chance."

Christopher Hobler, President of the New York State Athletic Trainers' Association said, "Certified athletic trainers have advocated the need for increased safety and awareness of mild traumatic brain injury, and have spent years educating coaches, officials, parents, athletes, and other medical professionals on concussion recognition and management. The

Concussion Management Awareness Act establishes guidelines and requirements for school districts in New York State to develop concussion management teams, and will require that any athlete with signs and symptoms consistent with concussion be removed from participation and cleared by health care providers trained in concussion management prior to their return to participation. With this bill, we are building a safer environment for the athletes in New York to be healthy on and off the field of competition.”

Some of the causes of traumatic brain injury include falls, motor vehicle accidents, sports concussions, violence, shaken baby syndrome, bicycle accidents, or any trauma to the head. Many times, concussions are left untreated since the symptoms are not always quickly identified. If left untreated, concussions can result in permanent brain damage or death. Young athletes, children and teens are more likely than adults to suffer a concussion, and their recovery time is longer.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

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