

***Letter in Support of Funding for the National Concussion Surveillance System
under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention***

March 21, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies,
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Service, Education
and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Service, Education
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

*Re: \$5 Million Increase for the Implementatation of the National Concussion Surveillance System in the
FY2017 Labor-Health-Education Appropriations Bill*

Dear Senators Blunt and Murray and Representatives Cole and DeLauro:

As organizations involved in child safety, we join together in urging the Committee to provide a \$5,000,000 increase to conduct the National Concussion Surveillance System by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Our focus is on the impact of concussions on our kids playing sports.

This would help respond to a fundamentally important recommendation in the 2013 report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), *Sports Related Concussions in Youth: Improving the Science Changing the Culture*.¹ The IOM report was specifically about youth sports. It is important that the survey go forward as a holistic process to include young athletes but also kids who fall while playing or riding their bikes, our senior citizens and the men and women who serve in the military.

In 2013, among children 19 and under, 1.24 million kids were seen in emergency rooms. This translates into 3,397 kids every day.³ Every year, at least 564,000 children are seen in hospital emergency departments for TBI and released.² In 2013, there were an estimated 1.24 million emergency room visits for injuries related to 14 commonly-played sports in children 19 and under.³ The greatest numbers of injuries were seen in children ages 13 to 15, who represented up to 37 percent of emergency department visits related to sports injuries.³

The national concern about concussions is viewed as part of the reason why, between 2008 and 2013, 2.6 million fewer kids are participating in sports.⁴ For example, there has been an 11.6 percent reduction in kids playing soccer and a 6.8 percent reduction in basketball.⁴ The values and positive health attributes of competitive sports are important and we must return kids to playing fields and courts. The

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best way to reverse this trend is to restore a sense of confidence and credibility to sports fields. This way, parents and their kids can make informed decisions, and every one involved—including school administrators and sports coaches--will know how to correctly react when they detect the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

The most effective solutions to health problems are based on evidence, whether it is medical or policy. We must strive for evidence based remedies to resolve the concussion crisis. Perhaps the most important organ in the human body, the brain, is our tool enabling us to think and know. But ironically that very organ remains one of the most mysterious parts of our bodies, and we also have a lot to learn about how concussions effect the brain of a child or young adult. The proposed surveillance project would look at a number of factors that will help inform a roadmap to prevent concussions, care for them and help kids recover from them for lifetimes of learning and athletic activities.

We applaud you for your previous efforts in this area, and we look forward to working with you to help advance this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Safe Kids Worldwide
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Public Health Association
National Athletic Trainers' Association
Safe States
Child Injury Prevention Alliance

¹ "Sports Related Concussions in Youth; Improving the Science, Changing the Culture" *The National Academies*, October 30, 2013. Accessed 03.15.16. Available at <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2013/Sports-Related-Concussions-in-Youth-Improving-the-Science-Changing-the-Culture/Report-Brief103013.aspx?page=1>.

² "Brain Injury in Children," Brain Injury Association of America. Accessed March 21, 2016. Available at <http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-children.htm>.

³ Ferguson RW, Green A. Staying in the Game: Changing the Culture of Youth Sports Safety. Washington, D.C. Safe Kids Worldwide, August 2014. Accessed March 21, 2016. Available at http://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/ResearchReports/skw_sports_study_2014_8-11-14.pdf. Citing U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) Estimates Query Builder. Available at <https://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/NEISSQuery/home.aspx>. Accessed June 24, 2014.

⁴ Farry, T, " Aspen Institute Project Play, 2014, available at <http://www.aspenprojectplay.org/the-facts>. Accessed 03.16.2016.