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LANSING

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New Law in Effect on Sports Concussions for Michigan Youth
Schools and Youth Athletic Organizations Have New Regulations to Follow

LANSING – With the start of the new school year, athletic programs have new rules to follow to help protect young athletes. A recent law that went into effect on June 30, 2013, regulates sports concussions for youth athletes in Michigan. Governor Rick Snyder signed the law in October 2012, making Michigan the 39th state to make a commitment to protect minors in athletic activities.

In the law, there are a number of important directives that the organizing entity, parents, and youth must follow. One of the most important directives is that a youth athlete must be removed from play if a concussion is suspected. He or she may not return to athletic activities until written clearance is received from an appropriate health professional. The statute also requires that adults involved in a youth athletic activity receive training on sports concussions, and that youth athletes and their parents or guardians receive educational information on sports concussions, so that everyone involved in the sports knows what signs and symptoms to look for.

“Our hope is that with more education, immediate action, and cautious return to athletic participation, together we can prevent the life changing effects that can result from a sports concussion,” said Dr. Matthew Davis, Chief Medical Executive with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a blow, bump or jolt to the head. It can occur in any sport or recreational activity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. emergency departments treat an estimated 173,285 sports and recreation-related concussions among children and adolescents a year. The highest incidents reportedly occur in boys’ football and girls’ soccer. More information from the CDC can be found online at <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/facts.html>.

The MDCH has developed a web page that provides information and materials to assist organizations to comply with the law, www.michigan.gov/sportsconcussion. For parents, coaches, or athletes looking to join a nationwide discussion about brain injury awareness, visit www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp.

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