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## **NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONS PROPOSED CONCUSSION ACT OF 2010**

DALLAS, September 23, 2010 – The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), a not-for-profit organization representing 33,000 members of the athletic training profession, endorsed the *Protecting Student Athletes from Concussion Act of 2010*, which was introduced today by the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee.

The NATA supports the bill and its goals to establish requirements for prevention and treatment of concussions suffered in school sports.

“Now is the time to create mandated sport-related concussion guidelines,” says NATA President Marjorie J. Albohm, MS, ATC. “This bill will increase student athletes' access to medical professionals trained in concussion management and build a safer environment for youth athletics. It is devastating to see an athlete collapse on the field with a head injury. Having a plan in place ensures clear, immediate and critical care.”

Athletic trainers have championed the need for increased safety and awareness of head injuries and concussions, and have spent decades educating coaches, officials, parents and other medical professionals. Research reports that 300,000 sport-related concussions occur each year – some even leading to fatal consequences. Youth athletes are at greater risk of sport-related concussions than college or professional athletes because their brains are more susceptible to injury; in addition, female athletes are even more vulnerable to concussions. Concussions are not easily detected and 90 percent occur without loss of consciousness. Studies show the prevalence is much higher than reported.

“Recognizing and managing brain injury is a core competency of athletic trainers,” says Albohm. “Certain sports and activities place participants at risk of head and neck injuries and the athletic trainer is critical to proper emergency response. Yet only 42 percent of high schools have access to an athletic trainer.”

NATA is spearheading the Youth Sports Safety Alliance with the support of more than 30 other leading health care and sports organizations. The Alliance seeks to raise awareness about youth sports safety and promote legislation to improve health care for young athletes. In addition to its ongoing research, educational tools and formal statements, NATA has issued concussion principles which include:

- Increase student athlete’s access to an athletic trainer to manage concussions once they occur.
- Conduct baseline testing of student athletes prior to engagement in contact sports to ensure accurate assessment of a player’s condition after sustaining a concussion.
- Educate parents, coaches, teachers and other stakeholders about the signs and symptoms of concussion.
- Establish state task forces to develop and implement state plans for concussion management.

*The Protecting Student Athletes from Concussion Act of 2010* would require school districts to implement management plans to ensure students are informed about concussions and given the support they need to recover. The legislation is specifically designed to increase awareness of concussion signs, symptoms and risks and improve concussion safety and management for student athletes. NATA looks forward to working with Congress for the swift passage and implementation of this legislation, said Albohm.

For more information on the National Athletic Trainers’ Association and youth sports safety please visit [www.NATA.org](http://www.NATA.org).

**National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) – Health Care for Life & Sport**

Athletic trainers are health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and sport-related illnesses. They prevent and treat chronic musculoskeletal injuries from sports, physical and occupational activity, and provide immediate care for acute injuries. Athletic trainers offer a continuum of care that is unparalleled in health care. The National Athletic Trainers’ Association represents and supports 33,000 members of the athletic training profession. NATA also supports the Athletic Trainers’ Equal Access to Medicare Act (H.R. 1137).

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