**Nebraska Sports Concussion Surveys**

**Executive Summary of Results**

***Three surveys were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of Nebraska's Concussion Awareness Law (LB 260) and issues surrounding youth concussions stemming from participation in organized sports.***

The surveyed populations were…

* ***High school athletic directors***: 164 respondents, response rate: 53%.
* ***High school head coaches***: 1,074 respondents, response rate: 46%.
* ***Youth*** *who sustained a concussion as a result of participation in a school or community/league/club organized sport (survey was completed with their parents)*: 94 respondents, response rate: unknown\*.

***I.******In general, there is high compliance with LB 260, though there is room for improvement in some areas, especially Component 3: removal from play.***

Component 1 of LB 260: Concussion education training must be made available to all coaches on how to recognize symptoms of a concussion, and how to seek proper medical treatment.

* 94% of *athletic directors* reported that their school has made concussion training available to coaches at their school. Among those whose school has made concussion training available, 77% reported that their school makes it mandatory for coaches to take concussion training.
* 92% of *head coaches* reported that their school made training on the signs and symptoms of concussions available to them before the start of practice, and among those whose school has made concussion training available, 87% reported that their school made concussion training mandatory.

|  |
| --- |
| Component 2 of LB 260: Athletes and parents must be provided with information about concussions prior to an athlete's participation in school sanctioned sports on an annual basis.   * 90% of *athletic directors* reported that their school provides education to parents and students about the signs and symptoms of concussions before the start of practice. * 77%of *youth*reported that they received information about the signs and symptoms of concussions before practice for the sport began. |
| (\*Response rate is unknown as the survey was sent to all youth who sustained a sports related concussion in the past year, but only those who sustained a concussion as a result of an organized sport were asked to complete the survey. For example, a youth who sustained a concussion while skateboarding would have been sent a survey, but asked not to complete the survey. There was no way to filter out such individuals from the survey sample.)  Component 3 of LB 260: An athlete suspected of having a concussion must be removed from participation and may not return until evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care professional.   * 76% of *athletic directors* reported that coaches or athletic trainers always remove an athlete with a suspected concussion from play. * 85% of *youth* reported that they were removed from play when they sustained their concussion, but just 70% reported being removed from play immediately (15% reported being removed at some stopping point in play and another 15% reported not being removed from play at all). |
| Component 4 of LB 260: An athlete removed from participation for a suspected concussion must receive written and signed clearance from an appropriate licensed health care professional and from the athlete's parents prior to returning to play. |

* 95% of *athletic directors* reported that their school requires an athlete with a suspected concussion to be cleared by a health care professional before returning to play.
* 69% of *athletic directors* reported that their school always requires the parents of an athlete with a suspected concussion to provide written approval before their child returns to play.

Note: The surveys of athletic directors and coaches reflect the organizational policies of schools. All organized sports are mandated to follow the guidelines of LB 260. The compliance with LB 260 of community/league/club sports may be quite different compared to schools because those organizations are not as likely to have policies to address the issue.

***II. LB260 has had an impact on school concussion policies.***

* Among *athletic directors* whose school has a formal written policy for removal and return to play for athletes with suspected concussions, 75% reported that their school's policy was developed as a result of LB260.

***III. There are some alarming barriers facing coaches to properly manage athletes with suspected concussions, including resistance from athletes and parents, and a lack of notification when an athlete receives a concussion in another sport or activity.***

* 71% of *head coaches* have coached an athlete who suffered a concussion or was suspected of suffering a concussion while playing a sport they coach.
* Among *head coaches* who have coached an athlete who suffered a concussion or was suspected of suffering a concussion…
  + 29% reported knowledge of an athlete they coached not reporting their concussion symptoms in order to continue playing.
  + 44% reported that an athlete they coached has resisted being removed from play due to a suspected concussion.
  + 13% reported that the parents of an athlete with a suspected concussion have tried to stop them from removing their child from play.
  + 23% reported that the parents of an athlete with a suspected concussion have tried to have their child return to play without a doctor's clearance.
* 44% of *head coaches* reported being always or often notified when a student athlete suffers a concussion in another school sport.
* 19% of *head coaches* reported being always or often notified when a student athlete suffers a concussion in a non-school activity or club sport.
* Certified athletic trainers (ATCs) likely reduce some of the burden placed on coaches to properly manage athletes with suspected concussions. Coaches at larger schools are much more likely to have the support of an ATC. Among *athletic directors*, 100% from Class A schools reported that their school has an ATC on staff, compared to 80% for Class B, 22% for Class C, and 4% for Class D. Overall, 36% of athletic directors reported having an ATC on staff.

***IV. There may be a need to educate youth participants in organized sports, their families, and coaches about the importance of taking concussions seriously and the dire consequence of second impact concussions.***

* 15% of *youth* reported not being removed from play after sustaining a concussion, and an additional 15% were removed at some stopping point in play. Therefore, 30% of *youth* were at risk for a potentially traumatic and life-altering second impact concussion.
* 8% of *youth* reported that no one evaluated them during the game/practice in which they sustained a concussion.
* 3% of *youth* reported playing in other sports while they were sitting out from the sport in which they sustained a concussion.
* 11% of *youth* reported not feeling fully recovered from their concussion before returning to athletics.
* 22% of *youth* reported instances when they experienced the symptoms of a concussion, but did not report them to a coach or athletic trainer in order to continue playing in the past year.
* 14% of *youth* reported not feeling confident that their coach or athletic trainer will appropriately manage a student with a suspected concussion (e.g., remove them from play and refer for further evaluation).

***V. Youth returning to the classroom after a suspected concussion may not be receiving the assistance they need.***

* 58% of *youth* reported that their teachers and school did not provide extra assistance in the classroom when they returned to school and were still recovering from their concussion.
* 34% of *athletic directors* reported that their school has a designated person for concussion management to assist student athletes when they return to school after a concussion.
* 60% of *athletic directors* reported that their school notifies teachers when an athlete with a suspected concussion returns to the classroom.
* 34% of *athletic directors* reported that their school has provided education to teachers about the signs and symptoms of concussions and return-to-learn accommodations/management of concussions.
* 6% of *athletic directors* reported that their school has a written return-to-learn policy that provides accommodation for the classroom work of a student athlete with a suspected concussion.

*Surveys were conducted by the Brain Injury Association of Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with the Nebraska School Activities Association and the Nebraska State Athletic Trainers Association.*