



Monday, April 1, 2013

**To: Sen. Mark Hass, Chair**

**CC: Committee on Education and Workforce Development**

**RE: Support SB 721**

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Please accept this written testimony in support of SB 721 on behalf of the Oregon Speech-Language and Hearing Association (OSHA), the 2,155 licensed speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and speech-language pathology assistants in Oregon, and the children and adults throughout the state who struggle with cognitive-communication disorders following concussion and depend on our services.

SB 721 would require training in concussion symptom recognition and management for school and non-school youth league athletic coaches and referees. The guidelines in this proposed Bill follow evidence-based best practice recommendations for management of concussion, including return to play only after symptoms have fully resolved with a gradual return-to-activity supervised by a medical professional.

Concussion is the leading cause of traumatic brain injury (TBI), with an estimated 1.6-3.8 million sports and recreation-related TBIs annually in the United States, costing over \$12 billion annually in direct and indirect costs. Early interventions after concussion (a.k.a., mild traumatic brain injury, mTBI) are critical to prevent fatal second impact syndrome, ensure appropriate rest for brain healing, support gradual return-to-activity for athletes as they recover, and address prevention of future concussions, which demonstrate cumulative effects. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of athletes will demonstrate ongoing post-concussive syndrome following a single or repeated mTBIs and will require ongoing rehabilitation. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists are crucial members of interdisciplinary support teams following mTBI. Sensitivity to noise, processing challenges, cognitive fatigue, organizational and decision-making impairments, distractibility, expressive and receptive communication impairments, and problems with memory/learning are a sampling of the symptoms addressed by speech-language pathologists and audiologists following mild traumatic brain injury.

Prevention of traumatic brain injury is a primary concern for speech-language pathologists and audiologists. This Bill provides much needed training among all youth athletic and recreational coaches to recognize concussion symptoms and remove athletes with concussion immediately from play to avoid fatal second impact syndrome and ensure appropriate management to maximize recovery.

We hope that you will join us in supporting SB 712. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Linda D'Onofrio, MS, CCC-SLP  
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