

April 2, 2013

To all present at today's hearing:

I apologize that I cannot attend today. I appreciate you allowing Dr. Chesnutt to submit my thoughts.

I am currently the Chair of the OSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, Co-Chair of OCAMP with Dr. Chesnutt, and former Chair of the NFHS SMAC. I have had the opportunity to be involved in all facets of concussion management, education and legislation over the past several years and I strongly oppose several components of this proposed legislation.

Athletic trainers must be removed from the educational requirements of the bill. Frankly, lumping these sports medicine professionals in with coaches and officials as people in need of basic education regarding the signs and symptoms of concussion is insulting to them as professionals and a waste of their time. ATs are, as a group, the most knowledgeable group of professionals in the state when it comes to concussion recognition and management and have been at the forefront of many studies and intervention conducted in our state over the past several years.

I have deep concerns about requiring officials to do anything beyond recognizing the signs and symptoms of a possible concussion and then sending the kids out for further evaluation. A few years ago, we made rule changes nationally that required high school officials to recognize signs, symptoms or behaviors of a possible concussion. This caused a significant uproar among officials who did not, at first, completely understand the rule. The officials DID NOT want anything to do with "diagnosing" a concussion or in making return to play decisions. Rightfully so!! When they realized that they were being asked to only remove a player showing signs or symptoms of a possible concussion, they were much more comfortable with the rule.

As this bill is written, if an official sends the player out, the official must then find out if, how, and when the injured player was evaluated and cleared. What if coach doesn't think the kid is concussed and ref does? Now we have a point of confrontation between coach and official, as well as parents! Also, we have officials all the way from high school refs who also do college officiating to high school kids working in youth leagues. And we have refs that do both club and high school sports so they will essentially be under different laws as to what is expected of them. Makes it very difficult to enforce.

I would propose that the officials be completely removed from the bill, or at the very most insert the NFHS rules book language that if an official see "signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, the player shall be removed from play and sent to the sideline for an evaluation." I am happy to discuss further by phone or e-mail, or perhaps I will be able to attend if there is any further public testimony.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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