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# ATHLETICS HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATOR HANDBOOK

A Guide for Designated Athletics  
Health Care Administrators





**Athletics Health Care Administrator Handbook:**  
A guide for designated athletics health care administrators

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Editor: Dawn Buth, Associate Director, NCAA Sport Science Institute.  
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Sport Science Institute and available online at [ncaa.org/ssi](http://ncaa.org/ssi).

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Dear Athletics Health Care Administrators,

It is truly exciting to welcome you to your role as an athletics health care administrator.

This role, established by Association-wide NCAA Independent Medical Care legislation, signifies a new era in collegiate athletics health care in which designated administrators on every member campus serve as an administrative point of contact for the health and safety of college athletes, thus making you a key member of the athletics health care team.

This handbook is designed to help you understand and excel in your role, and maximize your contribution to an environment that promotes health and wellness and delivers quality medical care, which serves as the foundation of student-athlete health and well-being.

I look forward to taking this exciting journey together to further student-athlete centered care within our athletics departments and on our college campuses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Hainline".

Brian Hainline, M.D.  
NCAA, Chief Medical Officer



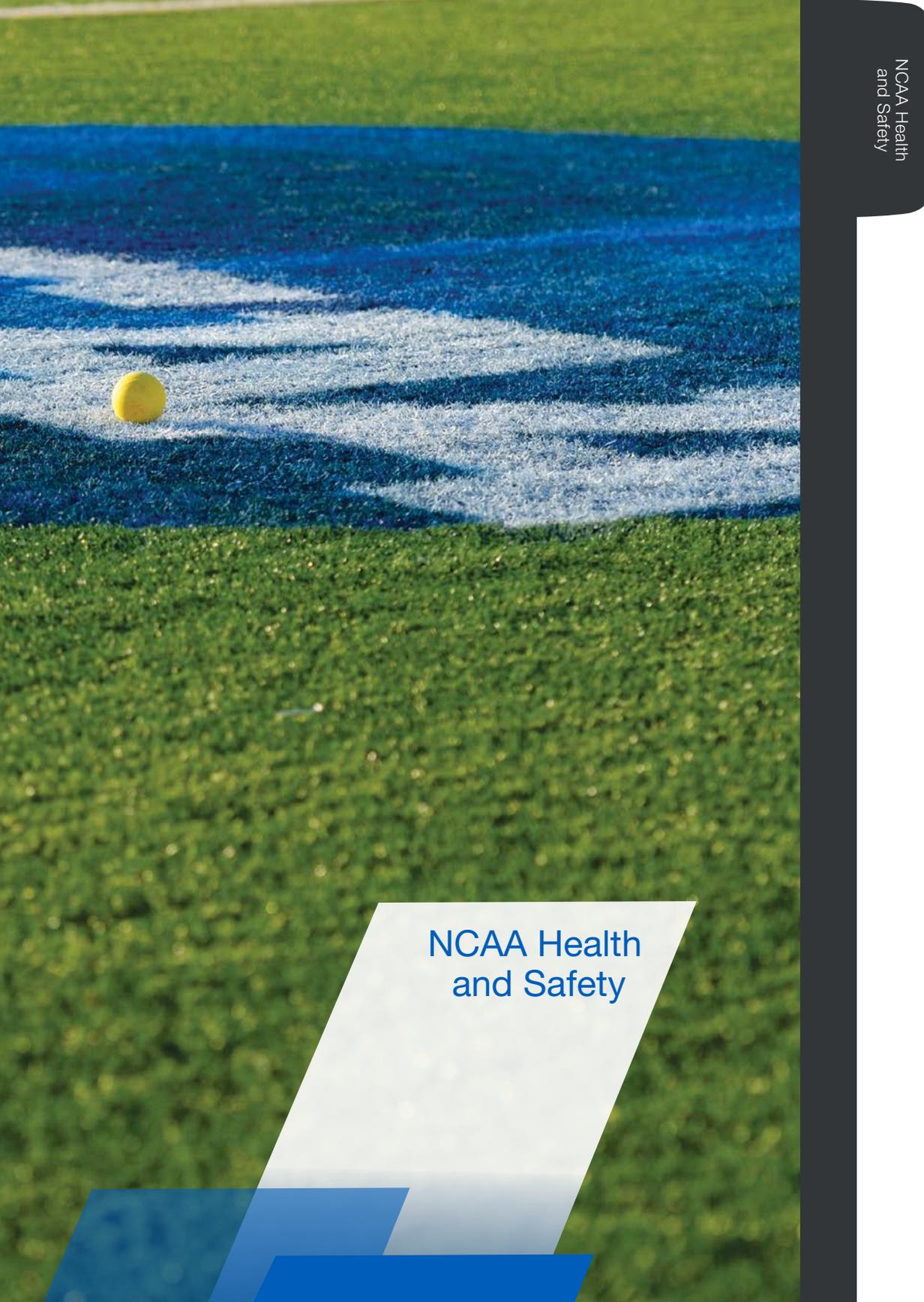
## Table of Contents

NCAA Health and Safety	7
Role of the Athletics Health Care Administrator	11
Health and Safety Legislation	17
Interassociation Best Practice Recommendations	21
Health and Safety Resources	25
Contact Us	31

# Introduction

This handbook is intended for athletics health care administrators at NCAA member schools, as established by NCAA Independent Medical Care legislation, to clarify and orient them to their designation and role. This guide is organized into six sections:

- Overview of NCAA health and safety efforts that support student-athletes
- Role of the athletics health care administrator
- Health and safety-related legislation
- Interassociation health and safety recommendations
- Health and safety resources
- Ways to contact the NCAA Sport Science Institute



NCAA Health  
and Safety

# NCAA Health and Safety

The NCAA was founded more than 100 years ago with the goal of keeping college athletes safe. Today, through a collaborative relationship between the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports and its Sport Science Institute, the NCAA continues its work to protect the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes, on and off the field and playing venues.

## THE NCAA SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE

Led by the NCAA chief medical officer, the mission of the SSI is to promote and develop safety, excellence and wellness in college student-athletes, and to foster lifelong physical and mental development. The SSI's vision is to be the pre-eminent sport science voice for NCAA student-athletes and member institutions, and to be the steward of best practices for youth and intercollegiate sports.

## A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

Since its inception in 2013, the SSI has worked collaboratively with CSMAS to provide an environment that promotes the safety and well-being of college athletes. The mission of CSMAS is to provide expertise and leadership to the Association in order to promote a healthy and safe environment for student-athletes. The SSI and CSMAS work in support of student-athlete health and safety through research, education and best practices in collaboration with member schools, national governing bodies, medical and research experts and leading scientific and sports medicine organizations.

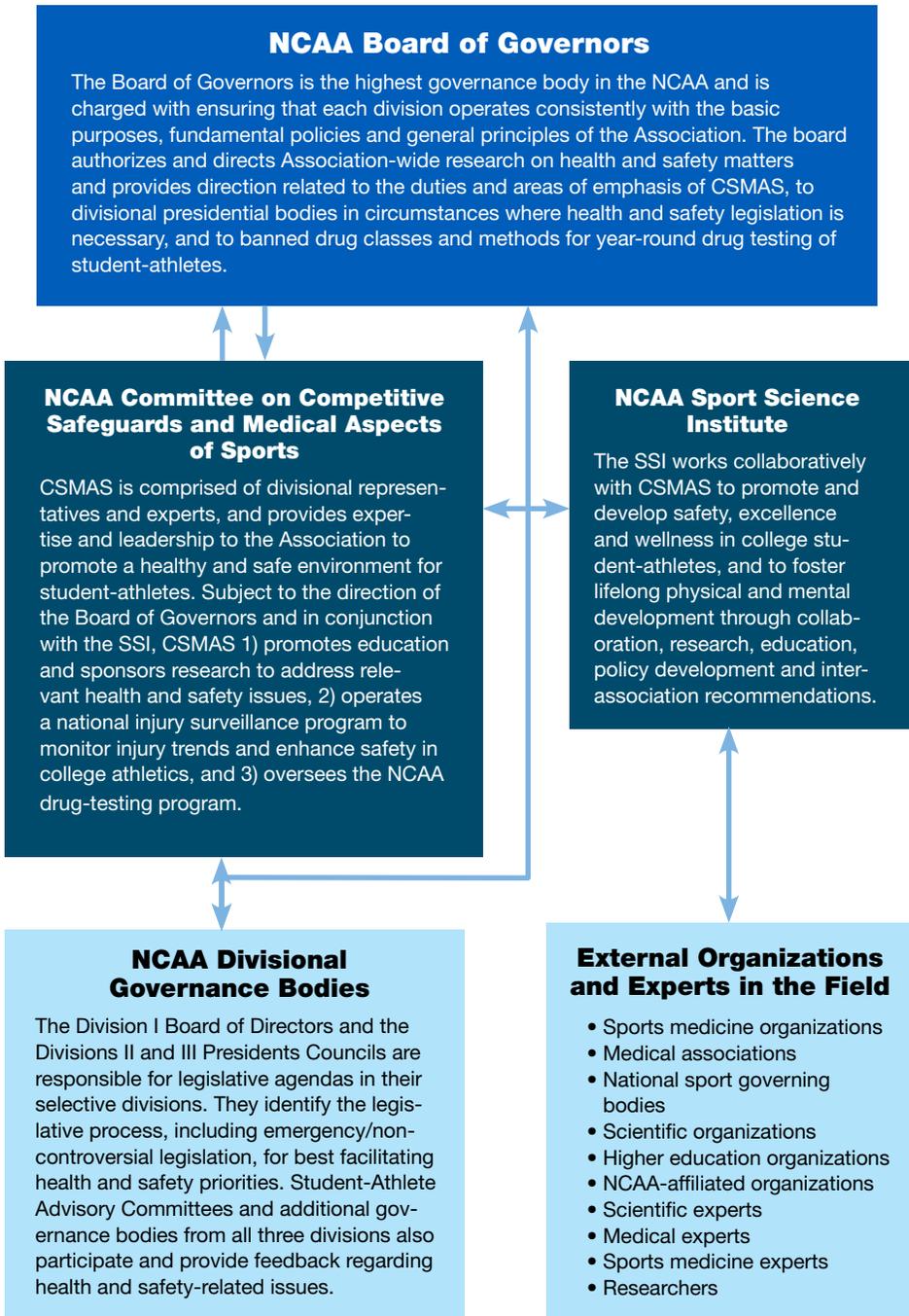
## NCAA Health and Safety Priority Areas

Through consultation with student-athletes, member schools, leading medical and scientific organizations, and key sport stakeholders, the following strategic priorities have been identified to conduct sport in a safe manner:

- Cardiac health
- Concussion
- Doping and substance abuse
- Mental health
- Nutrition, sleep and performance
- Overuse injuries and periodization
- Sexual assault and interpersonal violence
- Athletics health care administration
- Data-driven decisions

# NCAA Health and Safety

The chart below provides an overview of the entities and collaborative processes involved in NCAA health and safety education, policy and legislative development.





# Role of the Athletics Health Care Administrator

# Role of the Athletics Health Care Administrator



## What is an athletics health care administrator?

### A LEGISLATED RESPONSIBILITY

The athletics health care administrator is a designated position at each NCAA member school. The position is mandated by NCAA Independent Medical Care legislation requiring member schools to designate an athletics health care administrator as a part of a broader obligation to establish a structure that supports the delivery of independent medical care for college athletes.

### NCAA Independent Medical Care Legislation

Division I Constitution 3.2.4.16,  
Division II Constitution 3.3.4.17,  
Division III Constitution 3.2.4.18.

“An active member institution shall establish an administrative structure that provides independent medical care and affirms the unchallengeable autonomous authority of primary athletics health care providers (team physicians and athletic trainers) to determine medical management and return-to-play decisions related to student-athletes. An active institution shall designate an **athletics health care administrator** to oversee the institution’s athletics health care administration and delivery.”

# What is expected of an athletics health care administrator?

## **ROLE OF THE ATHLETICS HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATOR**

The designation of the athletics health care administrator establishes, for the first time, a primary point of contact at each member school who can communicate directly with the NCAA Sport Science Institute. The athletics health care administrator serves in an administrative capacity that complements the athletics health care team. This individual oversees the institution's athletics health care administration and delivery. The athletics health care administrator designation is not intended to have supervisory authority over primary athletics health care providers (team physicians and athletic trainers) or other medical providers.

The athletics health care administrator designation is, as the name implies, administrative in nature. Each school has the flexibility to determine who best fits this designation based on the individual needs, resources and staffing configurations of their institution.

It is recommended that the role of the athletics health care administrator include three primary areas of focus:

### **1. BE AWARE** of all NCAA health and safety-related legislation, interassociation recommendations and resources.

- Work with your athletics compliance staff to identify current NCAA health and safety legislation.
- Download and read the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook.
- Download and read the interassociation recommendations published by the SSI.
- Familiarize yourself with the health and safety resources provided by the SSI.
- Visit the SSI website for the latest health and safety-related information.
- Receive the latest SSI health and safety information by ensuring your email address is up to date in the NCAA Membership Directory.
- Sign up for the SSI quarterly newsletter.
- Contact the SSI staff with questions.

*To find the resources listed above, visit [ncaa.org/ahca](http://ncaa.org/ahca) or contact the SSI at [ssi@ncaa.org](mailto:ssi@ncaa.org).*

### **2. SHARE** health and safety legislation, interassociation recommendations and resources with stakeholders within your athletics department and on your campus.

- Identify stakeholders at your school who have some responsibility for student-athlete health and safety. A proposed list of such individuals may be found on page 16.
- Meet with the stakeholders you have identified above. Introduce yourself, explain your new role and learn what health and safety information is important to their work in supporting the health and safety of student-athletes.
- Develop a system for sharing and disseminating relevant health and safety information with identified stakeholders. This may include developing an electronic communication system or scheduling standing individual and/or group meetings.
- Ensure the email addresses of relevant stakeholders (e.g. team physicians and head athletic trainers) are up to date in the NCAA Membership Directory.

*To update information in the NCAA Membership Directory, log in to NCAA My Apps at [apps.ncaa.org](http://apps.ncaa.org).*

### **3. MONITOR** your athletics department health and safety policies and practices to ensure compliance with NCAA legislation and establish consistency with interassociation best practice guidance.

- Work with identified stakeholders to determine roles and responsibilities for fulfilling, monitoring and rehearsing health and safety-related requirements.
- Establish an action plan for identifying and addressing policies and practices not aligned with NCAA legislation and interassociation best practice guidance.

# Who are the key stakeholders with whom an athletics health care administrator regularly engages?

## **ATHLETICS HEALTH CARE COLLABORATION TEAM**

The athletics health care administrator designation necessitates regular and active engagement with stakeholders within the athletics department and across campus. While the specific nature of these engagements will vary depending on the size and structure of each institution, below is a sample list of stakeholders who may engage with the athletics health care administrator.

- Alcohol and Drug Prevention Coordinator
- Director of Academic Support
- Director of Athletics
- Director of Counseling/Psychological Services
- Director of Health Services
- Drug Testing Site Coordinator
- Faculty Athletics Representative
- Head Athletic Trainer
- Head Sport Coaches
- Head Team Physician
- Institutional Risk Managers
- Licensed Mental Health Professional
- Life Skills Administrator
- Office for Institutional Equity
- Senior Compliance Administrator
- Senior Woman Administrator
- Sports Dietitian/Nutritionist
- Strength and Conditioning Personnel
- Title IX Coordinator



NCAA Health  
and Safety  
Legislation



## NCAA Health and Safety Legislation

As an obligation of Association membership, NCAA member schools in all three divisions are responsible for ensuring compliance with the NCAA constitution and bylaws. The Association is committed to a principle of student-athlete well-being, which is codified in the Association's constitution (Constitution 2.2). The principle of well-being includes several subcomponents to this principle, including:

- Overall Educational Experience. (Constitution (2.2.1)
- Cultural Diversity and Gender Equity. (Constitution 2.2.2)
- Health and Safety. (Constitution 2.2.3)
- Student-athlete/Coach Relationship. (Constitution 2.2.4)
- Fairness, Openness and Honesty. (Constitution 2.2.5)
- Student-athlete Involvement. (Constitution (2.2.6)

In this way, a responsibility to student-athlete health and safety is a foundational requirement for all NCAA members.

Over the years, the Association has also passed specific health and safety-related legislation. Such legislation is pursued and passed separately by each of the three NCAA divisions. Consequently, health and safety legislation varies, sometimes significantly, from one division to another.

Athletics health care administrators should obtain the exact requirements for any current and new legislation through their athletics department's compliance staff. For a brief reference guide of NCAA health and safety-related legislation, visit the SSI website at [ncaa.org/ahca](http://ncaa.org/ahca).

## **THE ROLE OF THE NCAA COMMITTEE ON COMPETITIVE SAFEGUARDS AND MEDICAL ASPECTS OF SPORTS**

CSMAS is an Association-wide committee that provides expertise and leadership to the Association regarding health and safety issues. It is this body that typically determines when new health and safety legislation is necessary, or when changes to existing health and safety legislation are required. CSMAS reports to the Board of Governors, the highest governing body within the NCAA. While neither entity has authority to enact legislation directly, they can recommend legislation. For example, CSMAS can recommend new legislation to each of the NCAA divisions, who then must decide whether to introduce a legislative proposal. If the proposal is introduced, the division then assumes responsibility for facilitating consideration of sponsored legislation through respective divisional legislative processes, which will result in either passage or failure of the legislation.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH NCAA HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION**

Within the NCAA structure, athletics compliance officers working at individual member schools are responsible for ensuring compliance with existing bylaws. Schools that are found to be in violation of NCAA legislation could be subject to penalties that impact the institution and the eligibility of student-athletes.

It is recommended that the athletics health care administrator work in partnership with the athletics compliance staff to facilitate understanding and sharing of relevant health and safety-related legislation among the primary athletics health care provider staff. In addition, athletics health care administrators work with the primary athletics health care providers to identify and help implement strategies that ensure athletics health care is being delivered in a manner consistent with existing legislation and interassociation recommendations.



**Interassociation  
Health and Safety  
Recommendations**



## Interassociation Health and Safety Recommendations

The NCAA, through the work of the SSI and CSMAS, partners with leading medical, scientific and sports medicine organizations to develop and promote interassociation recommendations that make college sports as safe as they can be. The athletics health care administrator is responsible for overseeing the institution's athletics health care administration and delivery. Oversight may include being aware of and sharing interassociation recommendations with campus stakeholders, and supporting practices and policies on their campus consistent with current interassociation guidance.

### **WHAT IS AN INTERASSOCIATION RECOMMENDATION?**

Interassociation recommendations complement the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook and are differentiated from legislation in that they are not mandated by existing NCAA bylaws. They are evidence-based, consensus-driven guidance that reflect a broad constituency of experts and input from student-athletes, coaches, administrators and athletics health care providers. Advanced by available science, interassociation recommendations are living and breathing resources that can be flexible and responsive in real time to emerging scientific data that impact the health and safety of college athletes.

To download the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook and all the interassociation recommendations, visit the NCAA website at [ncaa.org/ahca](https://ncaa.org/ahca).



# Health and Safety Resources

# Health and Safety Resources

The NCAA, together with leading medical organizations, behavioral health centers and content matter experts, provides educational resources for member schools to promote and support the health and well-being of student-athletes.

Below you will find information about, and how to access, resources that support the NCAA's nine health and safety priorities:

## CARDIAC HEALTH

Though many student-athletes with heart conditions can practice and compete without experiencing problems, sudden fatality from a heart condition remains the leading medical cause of death in college athletes. To address this, the NCAA Sport Science Institute is collaborating with the most respected medical and sports organizations in the country to promote research, education and best practices around cardiovascular health.

To access best practices, checklists, fact sheets and other resources that support the cardiac health of college athletes, visit [ncaa.org/cardiachealth](https://ncaa.org/cardiachealth).

## CONCUSSION SAFETY RESOURCES

While sport-related concussion is an inherent risk in contact and collision sports, the NCAA has taken a leadership role, in collaboration with experts and key stakeholders, in evaluating the impact of concussions and repetitive head impact as well as developing groundbreaking research to mitigate the potential effects of head injuries in sport.

To access best practices, checklists, fact sheets and other resources that support the concussion safety of college athletes, visit [ncaa.org/concussionsafety](https://ncaa.org/concussionsafety).

## DOPING AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE RESOURCES

The NCAA is committed to fair and safe competition for college athletes. The NCAA drug-testing program, along with effective policies and educational programs, contributes to a campus environment that supports healthy choices, fair competition and a positive environment for student-athletes.

To access guides, programs, grants and other resources that support doping and substance abuse prevention for college athletes, visit [ncaa.org/substanceabuseprevention](https://ncaa.org/substanceabuseprevention).

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

The NCAA strives to improve access to quality mental health care with the goal of creating a culture where care seeking for mental health issues is as normative as care seeking for physical injuries. The SSI collaborates with higher education organizations and mental health experts to help college athletes, coaches, athletics administrators and campus partners better understand how to address mental health concerns and support student-athlete mental well-being.

To access best practices, handbooks, online modules and other resources that support the mental health of college athletes, visit [ncaa.org/mentalhealth](https://ncaa.org/mentalhealth).

## NUTRITION, SLEEP AND PERFORMANCE RESOURCES

The healthy performance of college athletes is foundational to the work of the NCAA. The SSI provides resources to promote adequate nutrition, hydration and the responsible use of supplements consistent with NCAA drug policies.

To access fact sheets and other resources that support the nutrition, sleep and performance of college athletes, visit [ncaa.org/nutritionleeeperformance](https://ncaa.org/nutritionleeeperformance).

## OVERUSE INJURIES AND PERIODIZATION RESOURCES

College athletes are often assumed to be some of the healthiest members of society, yet participation in years of competitive sports can expose them to overuse or overtraining injuries. The NCAA takes progressive steps to work with youth advocates, parents, clinicians, coaches and national sport governing bodies to modify safety guidelines, playing rules and equipment standards to minimize those risks and provide student-athletes with the best opportunity to enjoy a healthy career.

To access consensus statements, handbooks and other resources that support the overuse injury prevention and periodization of college athletes, visit [ncaa.org/injuryprevention](https://ncaa.org/injuryprevention).

## SEXUAL ASSAULT AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE RESOURCES

Sexual assault and interpersonal violence on campus are important issues that impact the well-being of the student body and campus community. The NCAA supports and



works with campus professionals, higher education associations and subject matter experts to develop collaborative programming and resources to support campuses in creating and maintaining a safe campus environment.

To access tool kits, programs, handbooks and other resources that support sexual assault and interpersonal violence prevention, visit [ncaa.org/violenceprevention](https://www.ncaa.org/violenceprevention).

## ATHLETICS HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION RESOURCES

Through its Sport Science Institute, the NCAA works with the medical community and member schools to promote best practices in athletics health care management and service delivery. Supported by leading medical and sports medicine organizations, the NCAA promotes a health care environment that provides independent medical care to college athletes and supports the integrity of student-athlete centered medical care.

To access best practices, briefing documents, fact sheets and other resources that support the administration of college athletics health care, visit [ncaa.org/athleticshealthcare](https://www.ncaa.org/athleticshealthcare).

## DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS RESOURCES

The SSI is constantly evolving its insights to reflect the most advanced research and provide the most innovative information and education to member schools. The SSI works collaboratively with the NCAA research department to collect and analyze data to inform the development of health and safety legislation, educational policies and interassociation recommendations that enhance the college athlete experience. The NCAA also serves as a national leader in the data collection effort for sport injuries and supports research that tracks and manages the mandatory reporting of catastrophic injuries and death among student-athletes at member schools.

To learn more about the research supported by the NCAA, visit [ncaa.org/datadrivendecisions](https://ncaa.org/datadrivendecisions).

## OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCES

The SSI provides information and resources to member schools about sickle cell trait, skin safety, inclement weather and other health and safety issues identified in the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook.

To access resources in support of other health and safety issues facing college athletes visit [ncaa.org/healthandsafetyissues](https://ncaa.org/healthandsafetyissues).



Contact Us

# Contact Us

Have additional health and safety questions? The SSI serves as a resource for you.

For questions, or to learn more about the role of an athletics health care administrator, we welcome you to engage with the SSI in the following ways:

## EMAIL THE SSI

The NCAA Sport Science Institute welcomes your questions and feedback! You may email the SSI directly with your inquiries at [ssi@ncaa.org](mailto:ssi@ncaa.org).

## SIGN UP FOR THE SSI NEWSLETTER

The SSI's quarterly newsletter provides the latest information to support the health and safety of student-athletes. To sign up, visit us at [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org) and click on "Sign up for the SSI Newsletter".

## VISIT THE SSI WEBSITE

Learn more about the work of the SSI and its nine strategic priority areas by visiting the SSI website at [ncaa.org/ssi](http://ncaa.org/ssi).

## VISIT THE ATHLETICS HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATOR HOMEPAGE

Find resources and information specifically for athletics health care administrators by visiting the SSI website at [ncaa.org/ahca](http://ncaa.org/ahca).

The SSI also communicates directly with athletics health care administrators to share relevant and timely health and safety information. To ensure you receive the most up-to-date information in your inbox, log in to NCAA My Apps at [apps.ncaa.org](http://apps.ncaa.org) and ensure your email address is current within the NCAA Membership Directory.





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