

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH AROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59-63-75 SO AS TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO POST ON ITS WEBSITE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSIONS SUSTAINED BY STUDENT ATHLETES, TO REQUIRE EACH LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO DEVELOP ITS OWN GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES BASED ON THE MODEL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES, TO REQUIRE AN INFORMATION SHEET ON CONCUSSIONS AND BRAIN INJURY BE PROVIDED TO CERTAIN PERSONS EACH YEAR WHO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS, TO REQUIRE THE REMOVAL FROM PLAY AND EVALUATION OF A STUDENT ATHLETE BELIEVED TO HAVE SUSTAINED A CONCUSSION DURING PLAY, TO ALLOW FOR THE EVALUATION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY CERTAIN TRAINED PERSONS, TO PROVIDE LIMITED LIABILITY FOR CERTAIN TRAINED PERSONS WHO EVALUATE STUDENT ATHLETES, TO PROVIDE A STUDENT ATHLETE REMOVED FROM PLAY AND EVALUATED MAY NOT RETURN TO PLAY UNTIL HE HAS RECEIVED WRITTEN MEDICAL CLEARANCE BY A PHYSICIAN, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

**Student athlete concussions, guidelines, management**

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 63, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59-63-75. (A) The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, in consultation with the State Department of Education, shall post on its website nationally recognized guidelines and procedures regarding the identification and management of suspected concussions in student athletes. The Department of Health and Environmental Control also shall post on its website model policies that incorporate best practices guidelines for the identification, management, and return to play decisions for concussions reflective of current scientific and medical literature developed by resources from or members of sports medicine community organizations including, but not limited to, the Brain Injury Association of South Carolina, the South Carolina Medical Association, the South Carolina Athletic Trainer’s Association, the National Federation of High Schools, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Guidelines developed pursuant to this section apply to South Carolina High School League-sanctioned events.

(B) A local school district shall develop guidelines and procedures based on the model guidelines and procedures referenced in subsection (A).

(C) Each year prior to participation in athletics, each school district shall provide to all coaches, volunteers, student athletes, and their parents or legal guardian, an information sheet on concussions which informs of the nature and risk of concussion and brain injury, including the risks associated with continuing to play after a concussion or brain injury. The parent or legal guardian’s receipt of the information sheet

must be documented in writing or by electronic means before the student athlete is permitted to participate in an athletic competition or practice.

(D)(1) If a coach, athletic trainer, official, or physician suspects that a student athlete, under the control of the coach, athletic trainer, official, or physician, has sustained a concussion or brain injury in a practice or in an athletic competition, the student athlete shall be removed from practice or competition at that time.

(2) A student athlete who has been removed from play may return to play if, as a result of evaluating the student athlete on site, the athletic trainer, physician, physician assistant pursuant to scope of practice guidelines, or nurse practitioner pursuant to a written protocol determines in his best professional judgment that the student athlete does not have any signs or symptoms of a concussion or brain injury.

(3) A student athlete who has been removed from play and evaluated and who is suspected of having a concussion or brain injury may not return to play until the student athlete has received written medical clearance by a physician.

(4) In addition to posting information regarding the recognition and management of concussions in student athletes, the Department of Health and Environmental Control, in consultation with health care provider organizations, shall post on its website content regarding opportunities in concussion evaluation and management available to providers making such medical determinations. Such information shall be posted by the department upon receipt from a participating health care organization.

(5) The athletic trainer, physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner who evaluates the student athlete during practice or an athletic competition and authorizes the student athlete to return to play is not liable for civil damages resulting from an act or omission in rendering this decision, other than acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or wilful, wanton misconduct. This immunity applies to an athletic trainer, physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner serving as a volunteer.

(E) For purposes of this section:

- (1) 'Physician' is defined in the same manner as provided in Section 40-47-20(35).
- (2) 'Student athlete' includes cheerleaders."

### **Time effective**

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 4<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2013.

Approved the 7<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2013.

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