



CONCUSSION EDUCATION, LEGISLATION, AND PREPAREDNESS

Whether students are walking down the hall, traveling off campus, or playing on the field, their safety and well-being is a paramount concern for any school.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) awareness and the number of TBI reports have increased in recent years, and your faculty and parents need to be prepared to react in the event of a TBI. Costly lawsuits have contributed to awareness and legislation to educate parents and students, protect student athletes, and prevent permanent brain damage. The legislation varies by state, so your school must remain informed and take extra precaution to limit liability and lawsuits. You cannot control the events that take place every day, but you can control your TBI education and preparedness.

► LEGISLATION

As of January 2014, all 50 states and Washington D.C. have passed concussion legislation ([USA Football](#)). Legislation is in place to increase requirements and education around TBIs, and to prevent further brain injuries after an athlete suffers the initial TBI. State TBI laws are often named Lystedt Laws, after [Zackery Lystedt](#). Lystedt suffered a severe brain injury during a middle school football game in 2006, due to multiple concussions.

In addition to state laws, Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin introduced a national youth concussion bill backed by the NFL, NHL, NBA, NCAA, USA Football, and US Soccer. The bill, named the "[Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act](#)," would set minimum state requirements on a national level.

Legislation is making its way to the private sector as well. In California, as of 2012, all public school districts were required to remove an athlete from a game if they suffered a concussion or head injury. Now, those [protections are expanding](#) to include private and charter schools as well.

These laws mean that student athletes are going to be more informed and more protected. But schools have to

protect themselves as well. If they choose not to abide by these laws, or ignore the signs of a TBI, they are risking an athlete's health, life, and costly lawsuits. In fact, in 2005, failure to pull a high school athlete off the field and inform his parents resulted in a permanent brain injury, and a [\\$3 million settlement](#). At the collegiate level, a La Salle University football player was awarded \$7.5 million to compensate him for the brain injury he suffered after the university was negligent in assessing his initial concussion ([NY Times](#)). And in another case, a Frostburg State University football player died after a second concussion. His parents have filed a lawsuit to seek compensation ([USA Today](#)).

► WHAT IS A TBI?

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), "a TBI is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI and the severity of a TBI may range from 'mild'—a brief change in mental status or consciousness—to 'severe'—an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury. The majority of TBIs that occur each year are classified as concussions or other forms of mild TBI."

► WHAT IS SECOND IMPACT SYNDROME (SIS)?

Second impact syndrome can occur if an athlete, who has already sustained an initial head injury, then suffers another head injury. "If, within several weeks, the athlete returns to play and sustains a second head injury, diffuse cerebral swelling, brain herniation, and death can occur. SIS can occur with any two events involving head trauma. While rare, it is devastating in that young, healthy patients may die within a few minutes," ([National Center for Biotechnology Information](#)).





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► BEFORE THE EVENT

Preparing for a head injury involves ensuring that helmets fit properly, using common sense methods during practice, and in general, taking preventative measures. Not every accident can be prevented; therefore, it's important for student athletes and their parents to be educated on the risks associated with playing sports, as well as steps for avoiding and responding to those risks. Much of the legislation currently in place requires schools to obtain signed waivers from both student and parent before sports participation, acknowledging that they have been informed about and are aware of the risk of head injury.

► AFTER THE EVENT

According to the CDC's, [Head's up: Concussion in High School Sports - Guide for Coaches](#) the following are specific steps that must be taken in response to a suspected TBI:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says him/her is symptom-free and it's okay to return to play.

► HOW SMR HELPS PREPARE + REACT TO TBI

A web-based SMR (student medical record) cannot prevent or cure a TBI; but, it can play a huge part in TBI preparation and response efforts. SMR provides the means to collect all waivers required prior to a student athlete stepping on the field or court. Because the system delivers schools a real-time view of submitted forms, determining student athlete compliance is simple. In turn, if legislation dictates that a school must provide proof that these waivers or other health forms were collected, SMR allows for that reporting. A web-based SMR also eliminates the hassle of collecting, filing, and storing hard copies of the forms, ensuring papers are not lost, and locating a waiver is as simple as logging into the system.



CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS (from [sportsmed.org](#))

- » Headache
- » Nausea
- » Vomiting
- » Balance problems
- » Dizziness
- » Fatigue
- » Trouble falling asleep
- » Sleeping more than usual
- » Drowsiness
- » Sensitivity to light
- » Sensitivity to noise
- » Irritability
- » Sadness
- » Nervousness
- » Feeling more emotional
- » Numbness or tingling
- » Feeling mentally foggy
- » Difficulty communicating
- » Difficulty concentrating
- » Difficulty remembering
- » Visual problems (blurry or double vision)

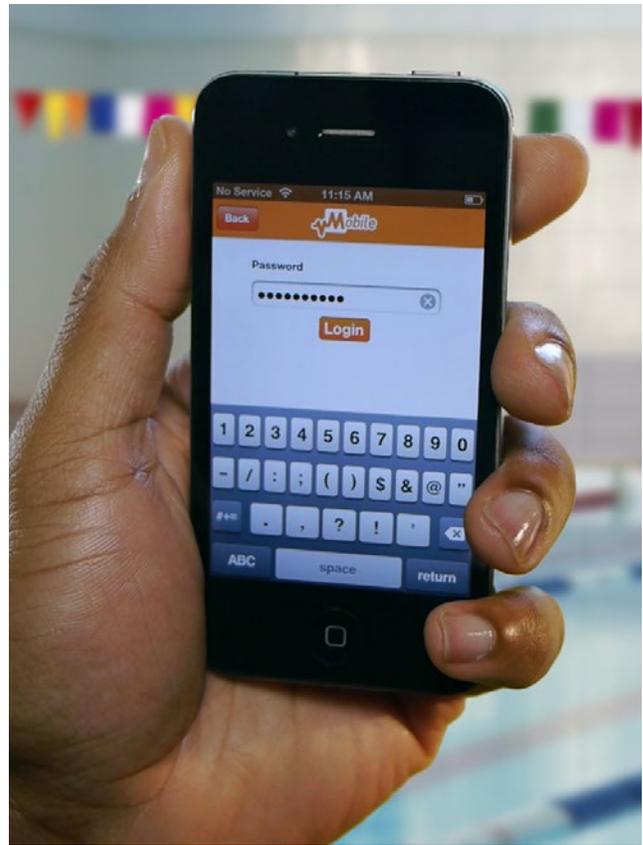
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SMR also provides the means to collect and store a full health history, chronic conditions, and other health events. Any past TBI occurrences can be recorded and made a part of the student athlete's permanent health file – information that can prove vitally important during treatment. Even baseline tests can be stored and referenced as needed in a student's SMR file.

Magnus911 provides the emergency and communication tools to react to any TBI. Magnus911 allows healthcare providers to view a student athlete's vital health information or fax it to an emergency room, and can be accessed from any device with Internet access or via the Magnus Mobile app. This means any existing conditions or previous injuries, such as a TBI, are communicated to healthcare providers, and the athlete can be treated accordingly. At the same time, Magnus911 delivers emergency contact information so that parents and/or guardians can be reached via phone, text, and/or email regarding the injury and treatment.

► SUMMARY

Traumatic brain injuries, regardless of severity, require specific preparation and response. Schools and athletic programs must remain cognizant of existing and developing state and/or federal laws, and work to comply with that legislation in order to protect both schools and students. SMR aims to help schools streamline the process, remain in compliance with regulations, and provide better care to students every day.



Magnus Mobile is available on any iOS or Android device.

This article is not legal or medical advice, nor a substitute for legal or medical advice.



Founded in 2006, Magnus Health is the leading provider of a web-based SMR (student medical record) solution designed specifically for use in schools. With more than 1000 programs nationwide—ranging from small, private K-12 schools to large, public universities—Magnus Health's primary focus is streamlining the collection and secure storage of student health information. The Magnus Health SMR equips schools with the tools they need to save time and money, reduce liability, improve emergency preparedness, and remain in compliance with HIPAA, FERPA, and state regulations.

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