

Strengthening local public health.



Connecticut Association  
of Directors of Health

**Connecticut Association of Directors of Health**

*Testimony in Support of Raised Bill No. 5113: An Act Concerning Youth Athletics and Concussions*

To the Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee on Children

February 27, 2014

Good afternoon, distinguished co-chairs and members of the Committee on Children. My name is David Knauf, Director of Health in the town of Darien and I currently serve as President of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH).

Recognizing that childhood participation in organized athletics, especially contact sports, is at an all-time high, CADH supports *Raised Bill No. 5113: An Act Concerning Youth Athletics and Concussions*. This bill addresses the protection of health and safety of youth engaged in intramural and interscholastic sports and seeks to reduce the number of children exposed to the risk of concussion by requiring training, communication, documentation and adherence to responsible standards and procedures by school boards, coaches, athletes, parents and guardians.

Scientific literature and recent media reports provide an indication of the short and long term implications of head trauma; this is particularly well-documented among children, but yet there is a glaring lack of data on these types of injuries.\* We support ongoing efforts to train those that oversee youth sports to ensure early identification and treatment. We also support all efforts to gather additional information to fully understand the magnitude of the problem, so that the data can be used to identify and implement additional prevention strategies. Health and injury information can guide policy implementation that serves to protect our children from further harm.

CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Directors of Health from each of Connecticut's 74 local health departments. Local health directors serve as the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and ensure the provision of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut. We work in concert with school administrators, health care providers, community and business partners to ensure the health of Connecticut residents and visitors. Thank you for your consideration.

\* 1. *Reducing Traumatic Brain Injuries in Youth Sports: Youth Sports Traumatic Brain Injury State Laws, January 2009–December 2012*; Hosea H. Harvey, JD, PhD *American Journal of Public Health*: July 2013, Vol. 103, No. 7, pp. 1249-1254. <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2012.301107>

2. *The Epidemiology of Sport-Related Concussion*; Daniel H. Daneshvar, et al *Clinics in Sports Medicine*, Volume 30, Issue 1, January 2011, Pages 1–17.

3. *Evaluation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Concussion Initiative for High School Coaches: "Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports"*; Kelly Sarmiento, et al *Journal of School Health*, Vol 80 Issue 3, February 17, 2010.

4. *Sport-Related Concussion in Children and Adolescents*; Mark E. Halstead, et al *Pediatrics* 2010; 126; 597; August 30, 2010.