

The state and the country are joining the WIAA in bringing concussion awareness and education policies to the forefront.

The bill sponsored by Rep. Jason Fields and Sen. Alberta Darling and supported by the National Football League, the Green Bay Packers and various health care providers, was signed into law by Gov. Scott Walker Monday.

In concert with the WIAA concussion policy that has been in existence for many years, the law requires immediate removal of an individual from a youth athletic activity if symptoms indicate a possible concussion has been sustained. Subsequently, if a concussion is confirmed, individuals may only return to competition or practice after being evaluated by a trained health care provider. The health care provider is required to provide written clearance in order for the athlete to return to action.

The law requires all youth athletic organizations to educate coaches, student-athletes and parents on the risks of concussions and prohibits participation in a youth activity until a parent or guardian has returned a signed information sheet indicating they have reviewed the materials. In addition, the state Department of Public Instruction, with assistance from the WIAA, was directed to develop guidelines and other information to educate coaches, athletes and parents about the risk of concussions and head injuries in all youth sports, including club sports.

Throughout the past two decades, the WIAA medical advisory committee developed concussion information, guidelines and education materials for its membership that can be utilized by other youth sports programs to address the new law.

The law also includes provisions to protect coaches, officials or volunteers from liability if they fail to remove an athlete from competition, unless there is gross negligence or gross misconduct.

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