



## **NASN Position Statement: Concussions - The Role of the School Nurse**

### ***SUPPLEMENTED WITH WASHINGTON STATE SPECIFIC INFORMATION***

#### **Summary of the National Association of School Nurses Concussions - The Role of the School Nurse Position Statement**

The position statement for concussion management in schools was first adopted by the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) in 2012. The most recent revision was June 2016. This is the first position statement for concussions in schools by the School Nurse Organization of Washington (SNOW).

*It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that the registered professional school nurse (hereinafter referred to as school nurse) is an essential member of the school health team to address student concussions. The school nurse has the knowledge and skills to provide concussion prevention education to parents/guardians, students, and school staff; identify suspected concussions; and help guide the student's post-concussion graduated academic and activity re-entry process (2016).*

The full NASN position statement: ***Concussions – The Role of the School Nurse*** can be found by following this link: <https://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/professional-practice-documents/position-statements/ps-concussions>

#### **Supplementary Information Specific to Washington State**

In 2009 Washington State passed Engrossed House Bill 1824 Youth Sports-Head Injury Policy, also known as the Zackery Lysted law. Included in the law were the requirements that school districts (OSPI, 2009):

- Work with youth sports organization to include in facility use agreements language that shows compliance with district concussion/head injury policies.
- Develop guidelines and forms with the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA).
- Annually collect signed concussion/head injury information and fact sheet from each athlete.
- Develop policies that include removing athletes who suffer a head injury from competition and prohibit return until cleared by a health care provider.

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The Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has posted a concussion management program and brought to Washington State through a partnership with the Brain Injury Alliance Washington. The Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children's REAP The Benefits of Good Concussion Management is a tool developed to help inform and educate students, health care providers, parents, coaches, and athletic trainers on how to manage concussions. REAP stands for remove/reduce, educate, adjust/accommodate, pace (McAvoy, 2014).

Students who suffer a concussion or post-concussion syndrome may qualify for a 504 Accommodation Plan. School nurses play an integral role in educating students, parents, teachers and coaches on the accommodation that student need to return to school and play. Students with prolonged symptoms of concussion should be evaluated by the districts 504 team to determine if the impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities. Guidelines for school nurse to use can be found at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/HealthServices/pubdocs/504ManualFinal.pdf> (Rich, 2010).

### SUMMARY

School nurses play a pivotal role in the management of concussions in a school setting. Washington State has implemented laws to ensure that students/athletes, parents, school staff, coaches, youth sports organizations, and health care providers are informed of the process for removal following head injury and the safe re-entry to sports and academics. School nurses are in the unique position to collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure that student's physical, academic and psychosocial needs are met. In addition, school nurses advocate for safe environments and education of students, parents/guardians and staff on prevention and management of concussions.

### REFERENCES/RESOURCES

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- McAvoy, K. (2014). REAP The benefits of good concussion management. Retrieved from <http://www.biawa.org/docs/pdf/2014%20REAP%20Waghinton%20Oct.pdf>
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Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (2009). Concussion management guidelines. Retrieved from <http://www.wiaa.com/ardisplay.aspx?ID=453>

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