

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1332 (Delegate Dumais, *et al.*)
Ways and Means and Health and Government Operations Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Task Force to Study Sports Injuries in High School Female Athletes

This bill establishes a Task Force to Study Sports Injuries in High School Female Athletes. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must provide staff support for the task force. The task force must review recent medical research on the nature and risks of sports injuries incurred by high school female athletes, including concussions, and shoulder, orthopedic ankle, and anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries; study effective methods of reducing these injuries; compare the rate of these injuries to those incurred by male high school athletes and review statutes and regulations from other states on programs designed to prevent a higher rate for females; establish protocols and standards for clearing a female athlete to return to play following an injury, including treatment plans; and make specified recommendations. The task force must submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an interim report by December 31, 2014, and a final report by December 1, 2015.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2014, and terminates December 31, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for MSDE are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must study whether MSDE should develop statutory or regulatory requirements for high school female athletic programs for the prevention of injuries. In addition, the task force must make recommendations regarding injury prevention, including whether high schools in the State should adopt policies that:

- limit the frequency and duration of practice;
- restrict athletic maneuvers that endanger adolescent females, such as heading a soccer ball;
- promote a warm-up program consisting of specific neuromuscular and proprioceptive training techniques; and
- require the use of additional protective equipment for female athletes.

Current Law: MSDE and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) are jointly responsible for developing standards and guidelines for school health programs. Chapters 548 and 549 of 2011 required MSDE to develop policies and implement a program to provide concussion awareness to coaches, school personnel, students, and parents in collaboration with DHMH, local boards of education, and other experts and stakeholders. A student or youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury in a practice or game must be removed from play. Once removed from play, a student or youth athlete may not return to play until he or she has obtained written clearance from a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. The concussion awareness program developed by MSDE was required to promote awareness on the nature and risk of a concussion or head injury, criteria for removal from and return to play, risks of not reporting injury and continuing to play, and appropriate academic accommodations for students diagnosed with concussions or head injuries.

Background: Concussions are a type of traumatic brain injury, caused by a blow or jolt to the head that can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that an estimated 300,000 sports- and recreation-related head injuries of mild to moderate severity occur in the United States each year, most of which can be classified as concussions. ACL damage is a common knee injury. Numerous sources indicate that ACL injuries are far more prevalent among female athletes than male athletes, and at least one study suggests that certain strategies for landing after a jump, particularly avoidance of landing in “knock-kneed” position, may help to reduce these injuries. Proprioception entails the awareness of posture, movement, position, and changes in equilibrium through reception of stimuli in muscles, tendons, and other internal tissues. Proprioceptive training can be employed both to prevent and help treat injuries, including ankle injuries.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, University of Colorado Hospital, Oregon State University, Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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