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Changes to Michigan's Concussion Law require more frequent training, review of materials for coaches and others involved in youth sports

LANSING, Mich. – A change to Michigan's Sports Concussion Law now requires coaches and other adults involved in youth sports to complete online concussion awareness training every three years, announced the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

Michigan was the 39th state to enact a law regulating sports concussions and return to athletic activity. The law went into effect June 30, 2013, and was amended in October 2017 via Public Act 137 of 2017.

Other changes to the law require MDHHS to periodically review its concussion awareness training program and make recommendations regarding its frequency. It also amends the definition of "youth athlete" to exclude a 17-year-old who is enrolled solely in a college, university or other institution of higher education.

"There is ongoing research on concussions and their effects on youth athletes," said Dr. Eden Wells, chief medical executive with MDHHS. "Requiring the online training be completed every three years instead of just once ensures everyone involved in youth sports has the most current information about the signs/symptoms and consequences of concussions."

A concussion is a serious brain injury caused by a blow, bump or jolt to the head. It can occur in any sport or recreational activity. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, each year U.S. emergency departments treat more than 173,000 sports and recreation-related concussions among children and adolescents.

Michigan's Sports Concussion Law requires all coaches, employees, volunteers and other adults involved with youth athletics to complete an online training program. In addition, the organizing entity must provide educational materials on the signs/symptoms and consequences of concussions to every youth athlete and their parents/guardians and obtain a signed statement acknowledging receipt of the information.

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The law also requires immediate removal of an athlete from physical participation in an athletic activity who is suspected of sustaining a concussion. The student athlete must then receive written clearance from a health professional before he or she can return to physical activity.

MDHHS provides many resources for coaches, parents and athletes at Michigan.gov/sportsconcussion.

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