



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William T. Stachowski

STACHOWSKI BILL ESTABLISHES HEAD INJURY AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT: Creates Program To Help In Prevention And Recognition Of Concussions

WILLIAM T. STACHOWSKI July 1, 2010

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In an effort spearheaded by Senator William T. Stachowski (D-Lake View), the Senate has passed legislation (S.8420) to establish the Head Injury Awareness and Prevention Act. The measure creates several programs that will improve early intervention and response of coaches and parents by educating them on the proper evaluation and management of concussions.

Reported mild traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), more commonly known as concussions, occur at all levels of sports as well as in school gyms and on playgrounds. According to the New York State Department of Health, between 2006 and 2008, more than 23,000 school aged youths in New York visited the emergency room or were hospitalized for concussions.

Several provisions in the Act include:

- Establishing the New York State Head Injury Awareness and Prevention Program;
- Creating an advisory board of experts in the area of concussion diagnosis, treatment and management to serve as advisors to departments and school districts;
- Establishing the Interscholastic Sports Head Injury Awareness Program;
- Creating the All Activity Head Injury Awareness and Outreach Program to provide detailed information for teachers, students and parents and guardians on identifying head injuries during any form of activity.

“Thousands of school aged children in New York State are brought to the emergency room each year with concussions,” said Senator Stachowski (D, Lake View), the bill’s sponsor. “Because many concussions happen while students are playing sports on school teams, in gym class, and even accidentally in the classroom, it is extremely important to have properly trained individuals on hand who can correctly evaluate the signs and symptoms of a concussion. Coaches, teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, and students themselves should be educated in

recognizing these symptoms. This legislation will do just that by establishing the New York State Head Injury Awareness and Prevention Program. The program will prepare school personnel and others through training courses, the distribution of educational materials and a dedicated website. When it comes to head injuries especially, immediate medical treatment is critical. Recognizing and properly evaluating the signs of a concussion that happens on school grounds will spare many young people potentially life threatening injuries. I am very pleased this important measure has been approved by the Senate and look forward to its passage by the Assembly now.”

The bill was sent to the Assembly.