



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senate Passes Bill to Better Protect Against and Treat Concussions and Traumatic Brain Injuries

CATHARINE YOUNG June 13, 2014

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*Senator Young's Bill S.7004-A Passes Senate*

ALBANY - This week, a bill sponsored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) passed the State Senate to strengthen and improve the treatment and management of traumatic brain injuries.

“A traumatic brain injury, especially for a child, can have serious debilitating consequences and sometimes even lead to death. This tragedy happens far too often in our state and around the country, which is why these changes are so important. With the improvements provided in this bill, we can help prevent more critical injuries and the devastation they can bring to a family,” said Senator Young.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, concussions and traumatic brain injuries affect 1.7 million people every year, with children and adolescents among the most at-risk. While most make a full recovery, for some, the effects of these types of head injuries can last a lifetime or cause death. Those most likely to sustain a concussion are children four years old or younger, and teenagers 15 to 19, as well as seniors 65 and older.

Prior to this legislation's improvements, the landmark Concussion Management and Awareness Act (CMAA) was passed in 2011, putting New York at the forefront of this national public health issue. The CMAA set stringent standards on concussion management for students that were widely considered to be the leading guidelines in the country. These standards on concussion management established a robust set of laws, emphasizing proper treatment and return-to-play protocols for children and adolescents who may have suffered a traumatic brain injury while participating in school sports.

With more action still needed to protect students and young people from the effects of a serious head injury, Senator Young's new legislation further strengthens the CMAA. Through the creation of a concussion management advisory committee within the State Department of Health's (DOH) Traumatic Brain Injury Services Coordinating Council (TBISCC), this act provides improved recognition, treatment, management, and public awareness of traumatic brain injuries.

The TBISCC was established in 1994 to act as an advisory body to the DOH and is charged with recommending long-range objectives, goals, and priorities, while providing advice on the planning, coordination, and development of needed services related to traumatic brain injuries.

The concussion management advisory committee that would be created by Senator Young's legislation will be composed of 12 experienced experts tasked with developing methods to raise public awareness and provide more information on recognizing and managing concussions and mild traumatic brain injuries. Their recommendations to the TBISCC must take into account the latest scientific and academic advancements in the field of traumatic brain injuries, ensuring State policies remain as up-to-date as possible.

“It is crucial that head injuries are quickly recognized and people are able to receive speedy treatment. After a concussion or traumatic brain injury, every minute is vital to avoiding long-term or permanent damage. With these changes, we are making sure there is as much information as possible available to people about recognizing the symptoms of a serious head injury and how it should be treated. By working together to raise awareness, we can help to save young lives from lifelong harm or even death,” said Senator Young.

Senate Bill 7004-A has now been delivered to the State Assembly, where it must also pass.

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