



September 23, 2010

Mr. George Miller, Chairman  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
2205 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Mr. Timothy H. Bishop  
306 Cannon H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: *Proposed legislation on concussion education and supportive accommodations*

Dear Congressmen Miller and Bishop,

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN), I am writing to express the full support of AACN for the proposal to develop legislation calling for states to develop active plans for educating school staff (and parents/athletes) about the risks associated with concussion and to develop active academic support services for students returning to school after concussion.

We have discovered over the past decade that not only is concussion a very common injury among school-aged children and adolescents, but also that students often experience considerable difficulties upon their return to normal academic demands because of the significant cognitive dysfunction present during the acute phase after concussion. Providing educators with information and resources to assist students in their transition back to the academic setting after concussion is a necessary and beneficial service from both an educational and public health perspective.

At the same time, AACN supports the proposed movement directed at informing educators, administrators, students, parents and athletic staff on the signs and symptoms, potential seriousness, and risks of concussion. This movement will ultimately have a significant public health impact in preventing negative outcomes following concussion in youth.

AACN also strongly supports the inclusion of clinical neuropsychologists in any local, state or national legislation that identifies licensed healthcare professionals qualified to participate in the evaluation, management and clinical-decision making regarding an athlete's fitness to return to play after sport-related concussion.

As you may be aware, clinical neuropsychologists have been at the forefront of both scientific and clinical initiatives aimed at reducing the risks associated with sport-related concussion and improving the overall safety for athletes participating in contact and collision sports over the past 25 years.

In fact, most of the large-scale, prospective studies conducted over the past two decades have been led by clinical neuropsychologists as the Principal Investigators (PI). These studies have not only vastly improved our scientific understanding of concussion, but also provided an evidence base that now drives the clinical assessment and management of concussion in athletes. A review of the literature will reveal that clinical neuropsychologists have contributed perhaps the largest share of peer-reviewed scientific papers on this topic, as well as several highly-respected text books.

Clinical neuropsychologists also play a key role in clinical settings charged with evaluating and management athletes after concussion, including our role in decision-making on an injured athlete's readiness to safely resume competition after concussion. Nearly all major college and professional sports organizations look to the clinical neuropsychologist as an important resource in the concussion management program. Because of our dual involvement in developing both the science and clinical protocols for related to concussion, you will frequently find clinical neuropsychologists lecturing on the assessment and management of sport-related concussion at large national meetings for physicians, certified athletic trainers and other "licensed healthcare professionals."

Based on our unparalleled contribution, both clinically and scientifically, over the past 25 years, there is no question that clinical neuropsychologists are an important resource in the clinical evaluation and management of athletes affected by sport-related concussion. Accordingly, we fully support the inclusion of clinical neuropsychologists among the list of licensed healthcare professionals approved by any legislative initiatives relevant to sport-related concussion.

In closing, we very much appreciate the role you are playing to ensure the best outcome for all student-athletes involved. AACN would be happy to participate in any forum that discusses this issue with legislators or other interested parties.

Sincerely,

Michael McCrea, PhD, ABPP  
Board Certified Clinical Neuropsychologist  
President, American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN)