

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH
INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

Cliff # 1043446

PREPARED FOR: Arlene Paton, ADM, Population and Public Health

TITLE: Concussion Prevention and Management

PURPOSE: To provide an update on the development and implementation of concussion prevention, diagnosis and management training and resources including funding previously allocated to the British Columbia Injury Research and Prevention Unit (the Injury Unit).

BACKGROUND:

Concussions continue to receive attention in the media, with some doctors and child advocates calling for more government oversight on concussion prevention. Concussions are the most common form of head injury. It is believed they are underreported due to a lack of consensus on the definition of a concussion and misconceptions among the general public. The majority (80-90 percent) of concussions resolve in a 7-10 day period, though the recovery time may be longer for children and adolescents.

Evidence suggests children and youth are:

- at greater risk of concussions and serious head injury than the general population;
- take longer than adults to recover following a concussion; and
- at risk of permanent change to the way they talk, walk, learn, work and interact.

If an individual returns to activity too soon and a second concussion is sustained before recovering from the first, a condition known as second impact syndrome may occur: a swelling of the brain that can result in brain damage causing severe disability or even death. An individual is three times more likely to sustain a concussion while in recovery from the first concussion.

In BC, there were 45,401 hospitalizations resulting from head injuries from 2001 to 2010, 22.6 percent of which occurred in children and youth ages 1-19 years. Concussions accounted for 12.9 percent of all head injury hospitalizations.

The Ministries of Health, Education, and Community, Sport and Cultural Development have all been called upon by various groups to do more to prevent and manage concussions. The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) has been working with the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, the Ministry of Education, Doctors of BC and provincial sport organizations to establish standardized concussion management protocols and guidelines.

DISCUSSION:

In December 2012, the Ministry partnered with the Injury Unit and Child Health BC to support the creation and implementation of an interactive, online Concussion Awareness Training Tool (the Training Tool) www.cattonline.com (Cliff 960097). The Training

Tool has three components:

- The first is for health professionals and addresses standardized practices for concussion prevention, diagnosis and management
- The second targets parents, players, coaches and trainers with resources on how to prevent, recognize and recover from concussions
- The third is for educators and school support staff so they understand how to guide youth back to school life after a concussion.

The first two components are now available and the third is planned to be ready by end of December 2015.

While promotion of the Training Tool has been limited to date, the Training Tool for health professionals has received over 60,000 views. The parent, players, coaches and trainers component has received over 17,000 views with over 1700 people completing the full on-line course. Football BC now requires all parents entering children in football to complete the course before the registration can be completed. Further promotion of the Training Tool to other sport organizations as well as key contacts in the education and health sectors must continue.

ADVICE:

It is recommended that the Ministry begin promoting the Training Tool through the Healthy Families BC social media channels, as well as through any other opportunities available, once development is completed. Ministry staff will continue to work with colleagues in the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, as well as the Ministry of Education to determine how the tool can be most effectively implemented in sport and education settings.

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Date:	December 9, 2015
File Name with Path:	

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH
DECISION BRIEFING NOTE**

Cliff # 1046669

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Terry Lake, Minister of Health - **FOR DECISION**

TITLE: Concussion Prevention/Management Policies and Legislation

PURPOSE: s.13

BACKGROUND:

Jurisdictions have used a range of tools to address concussion prevention/management:

- In November 2015, Ontario introduced (*Rowan's Law Advisory Committee Act*) an Act to establish an advisory committee to review the jury recommendations in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer. If passed, a committee would report to the Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, with recommendations on how to prevent and properly manage concussions.
- In December 2015, Quebec released a report and action plan outlining a cross-government approach to concussion prevention, awareness and management. s.16
s.16
- Prime Minister Trudeau's mandate letters to the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities and to the Minister of Health identified the need for a harmonized education and management strategy to address concussions in sport.
- Fifty US states and the District of Columbia have laws to address traumatic brain injury management for youth in sports. In Washington, youth athletes must be removed from the game and return only when cleared by a medical professional trained in concussion issues. Each school district must work with the Washington inter-scholastic activities association to develop guidelines and forms to educate coaches, youth athletes, and their parents on the nature and risk of head injury.

DISCUSSION:

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The US experience with legislation raises some issues. The Washington legislation sets up a good framework for action but there is little follow-up or enforcement. Requiring an athlete to be cleared by a medical professional before returning to play can be difficult for those without easy access to primary care. In addition, new research suggests that for the majority who properly follow the concussion protocol, being cleared by a physician is not necessary and only places a greater burden on the health system. Those who experience complications as they return to activity should consult with a physician.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

s.17

RECOMMENDATION:

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Approved/Not Approved
Hon. Terry Lake
Minister of Health

Date Signed

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Date: January 21, 2016

Page 005 to/à Page 006

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Introduction

The Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research is responsible for ensuring that the safety and integrity of individuals are protected during sports activities.

The actions taken by the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR) to fulfill this responsibility are aimed at the population in general, but more particularly at people participating in sports and in active recreational pursuits, those working in sports and recreation, as well as sports organizations.

Healthy lifestyle habits, especially being physically active, have beneficial impacts on physical fitness, physical and mental health and academic success. Physical activity and sports are also associated with young people staying in school, well-being and a better quality of life.

However, certain sports and recreational activities present a higher risk of injury for participants, including concussion. In light of new medical knowledge concerning the impacts of these injuries for health, the Québec government has stepped up its efforts to prevent and manage concussions in sports. Among other things, the MEESR has set up a task force on concussion, known by its French acronym GTCC (Groupe de travail sur les commotions cérébrales), to consider this issue. The GTCC presented its final report to the Minister in 2015.

This action plan sets out the measures that the Québec government intends to take, in collaboration with the MEESR, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) and stakeholders from the education and sports communities.

The measures contained in the action plan apply to roughly 30 sports for which a risk of concussion has been documented or identified. Since the degree of risk varies according to the type of activity and the level of performance, these measures can be adjusted to suit each situation and sport. The sports where the degree of risk is considered highest will be addressed as priorities.

Focus 1 – Prevention

To help reduce the number of concussions that occur during sports and recreational activities, the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR) will take the following steps:

	MEASURE	STAKEHOLDER CONCERNED	TIMEFRAME
1.1	Document the prevalence of concussions and the circumstances in which they occur.	MEESR Sports federations concerned	Immediately
1.2	Provide technical and professional support for sports federations, to help them analyze preventive elements (environment, supervision, equipment and behaviour).	MEESR Sports federations	Immediately
1.3	Ensure that severe penalties are imposed on individuals who behave in a dangerous or violent way.	Sports federations concerned MEESR	Immediately
1.4	Amend the safety rules as required, and make sure they are consistent with current playing rules. The safety rules must be approved by the Minister, as stipulated in <i>An Act respecting safety in sports</i> .	Sports federations concerned MEESR	High-risk sports: Fall 2016 Other sports: Fall 2017
1.5	Assist the sports federations with the task of appointing resources in every team to oversee, identify and manage concussions.	MEESR Sports federations	Winter 2016
1.6	Make sure that athletes have a better understanding of the techniques they can apply to protect themselves in the sports where the risk is highest.	Sports federations MEESR	Fall 2016

Focus 2 – Awareness

To enhance knowledge and consideration of concussions occurring during sports and recreational activities, the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR) will implement the following awareness-raising measures:

	MEASURE	PUBLIC CONCERNED	TIMEFRAME
2.1	Work with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux to organize an awareness campaign on effective management of concussions.	Parents	Spring 2016
2.2	On the MEESR website, add a section on concussions in sports and recreational activities.	General population	Immediately
2.3	Produce an awareness-raising tool explaining why concussions in sports are of such concern.	Coaches, officials, administrators	Summer 2016
2.4	Produce an awareness-raising tool explaining the importance of a gradual return to school after a concussion.	School principals, physical education teachers and other teaching staff	Summer 2016
2.5	Produce an awareness-raising tool emphasizing the role of parents in communicating concussion-related information to their child's sports team and school.	Parents	Summer 2016
2.6	Produce an awareness-raising tool that will help participants recognize the symptoms of concussion.	Participants	Summer 2016

Focus 3 – Management

To ensure that initiatives to address concussions in sports and recreational activities are implemented in a coordinated fashion, the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR), with the support of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS), announces the following concussion management measures:

	MEASURE	STAKEHOLDER CONCERNED	TIMEFRAME
3.1	<p>Circulate an initial directive encouraging the adoption of the following measures as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediately remove an individual from the game or from training if a concussion is suspected • do not allow the individual to resume play or training the same day, even if the concussion symptoms have disappeared • do not leave a potentially concussed person alone • inform the parents of any incident in which there is a chance that a minor may have suffered a concussion 	<p>Sports federations</p> <p>MEESR</p>	Immediately
3.2	Set up a panel tasked with promoting dialogue and collaboration between the sectors concerned, with a view to preparing a concussion management protocol and the tools required to apply such a protocol.	<p>MEESR</p> <p>Sports and education communities</p> <p>MSSS</p>	Immediately
3.3	Provide sports organizations with a concussion management protocol.	<p>MEESR</p> <p>MSSS</p> <p>Sports federations</p>	Spring 2016

Page 011

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