Youth Sports Traumatic Brain Injury Laws

Prepared by the Policy Surveillance Program Staff

SUMMARY

This map identifies variation in state laws that address youth sports traumatic brain injury. This dataset is longitudinal and captures laws in effect from January 1, 2009 through July 1, 2017.

ABOUT YOUTH SPORTS TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY LAWS & THE DATA

Each year as many as 300,000 young people suffer traumatic brain injuries (TBIs)\(^1\), or what is more commonly known as concussions, from playing sports. TBIs can have serious short and long-term health effects, and all states have passed laws aimed at reducing harm from brain injuries occurring during youth sports activities.

Since Delaware passed the first TBI law in 2008, states have responded to the problem of brain injuries in youth sports by adopting laws aimed at reducing harm from injuries occurring during team practices and events by regulating when athletes should be removed from the field, how parents are notified of a concussion and informed of the risks, who may clear their return, and when they are healthy enough to return to the field or the classroom (also known as “return to play” and “return to learn” provisions).

While states have included “return to play” provisions in their laws since 2009, new research and CDC guidelines\(^2\) about the dangers of returning to the classroom too soon have spurred 13 states to enact “return to learn” provisions. These new provisions work to ensure that student athletes who have experienced a concussion gradually return to the classroom so their brains have had appropriate time to heal.

Some findings from the dataset include:

- Seven years ago, only 10 states had laws that specifically address youth sports TBIs.
- All 50 states and the District of Columbia now have laws that specifically address youth sports TBIs.
- Today, 13 states have youth sports TBI laws that specify requirements for a return-to-learn policy.

NAVIGATING THE DATA


Essential Information for Youth Sports Traumatic Brain Injury Laws – July 2017
There are two ways to navigate the data by clicking the **Filter** tab or the **Explore** tab — for each option, the data can be visualized in a map and table format or in jurisdiction profiles.

**Filter**
The dataset homepage will default to the Filter tab. Here, users may answer a series of questions to learn more about the characteristics of the laws. Answering more than one question will show all the jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria. Criteria selected will be listed above the questions, and can be removed by clicking the white X or by clicking “Reset” above the questions.

**Explore**
Users can access Explore by clicking the Explore tab in the bar above the questions. Using Explore, users will see the answers to one question across all jurisdictions.

The primary questions in this dataset are:

1. Does state law specifically address youth sports TBIs?
2. Does the law require a student athlete with a suspected TBI to be removed from play?
3. Must the parent or guardian be notified of the suspected or diagnosed TBI?
4. Does the law specify requirements for a return-to-play policy?
5. Does the law specify requirements for a return-to-learn policy?
6. Does the law require mandatory TBI-specific training for coaches?
7. Does the law explicitly require distribution of a TBI information sheet?
8. Must the TBI information sheet be distributed at least annually to student athletes or their parents or guardians?
9. Does the law explicitly address liability?
10. What preventive measures are required to reduce the likelihood of TBIs?

**DISPLAYING THE RESULTS**
There are two display modes once criteria have been selected by using either the Filter or Explore tab — **Map** display mode and **Profiles** display mode.

**Map Display**
LawAtlas.org dataset homepages default to the map display mode. When querying the data using the Filter tab, all jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display in one tone of yellow. Those jurisdictions that do not meet the criteria selected will be colored gray. When querying the data using the Explore tab, the map will illuminate with colors from yellow to red that are associated with the various answer choices (the color-coding is defined by the key to the left of the map).

Below the map, a table will appear. Using the Filter or Explore tab to navigate the questions will change the display:

- Using the Filter tab, you can select an unlimited number of criteria and the applicable jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria will be displayed in the table below.
- Using the Explore tab, you can isolate a single criterion and the applicable jurisdictions will appear in the table below.
Profiles Display
The Profiles display presents the results of the criteria selected in a text-based format for each applicable jurisdiction. Using the Filter tab, jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display. Using the Explore tab, jurisdictions that meet the criterion selected will display. If no criteria are selected, the full profiles for each state will appear under both Filter and Explore.

Profile Legend
Within each Profile box, above the questions and answers, there are additional options and information useful in exploring the law:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$§$</th>
<th>Toggle Legal Text – Selecting this option will show all the legal text used to answer questions for this jurisdiction.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toggle Full Place Profile – Selecting this option will show all questions and answers for this jurisdiction, regardless of what was selected using the Filter or Explore tabs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>Toggle Size – Selecting this option will make the profile larger, but will not change the information displayed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legal Text History – This interactive timeline displays when changes in the law have occurred within a jurisdiction. Using the arrows to the left or right, users may explore how the law has changed over time as new amendments to the law have been enacted. The timeline will change from gray to a shade of yellow when the jurisdiction passed its first relevant law. Each change in the law after that is marked by a break in the timeline.

Map and Profile Legend
There are a few symbols to be aware of in both Map and Profiles display modes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$\section$</th>
<th>Section Symbol – Clicking this symbol will open a window that displays excerpts from the law correspond to the question and answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta$</td>
<td>Caution Note – Clicking this symbol will open a small window that displays text that describes important caveats about the question and answer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATASET RESOURCES
Each dataset homepage includes the following resources available for download:

- Data: The Data file exports in CSV format and may contain two tabs. The “Statistical Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset, displayed as values defined
in the accompanying Codebook. The “Summary Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset in text form, as well as the accompanying citations and any caution notes that may be included. Note: if there is only one tab available for download it will be the “Statistical Data” as described above.

- **Codebook**: The Codebook defines all of the coded variables in the dataset. The Codebook lists the question, question type, variable name, variable value and variable label. The Codebook should be used in conjunction with the Statistical Data extract.

- **Research Protocol**: The Research Protocol is a comprehensive document that outlines the entire methodology of the project, including the scope, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data collection methods, definitions, coding scheme decisions, as well as the quality control process.

- **Summary Report**: The Summary Report provides a snapshot of important findings from the dataset.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**


- Hosea H. Harvey, JD, Associate Professor of Law at Temple University’s Beasley School of Law, served as subject matter expert for this project.

This collection of laws does not provide legal advice nor does it address enforcement of laws, administrative policies, case law, or any other sources of law. Should you have a specific question about these laws in your state, please contact an attorney in your jurisdiction.