



RE: Request to include neuropsychologists as medical professionals with authority to make return to play decisions

Dear Ohio Youth Sports Concussion and Head Injury Return to Play Guidelines Committee:

The above-listed organizations are part of the Inter Organizational Practice Committee (IOPC), and we are contacting you regarding your committee's consideration of including certain chiropractors as independent return-to-play decision makers under ORC 3313.539 and ORC 3707.51. If chiropractors are to be specifically named to the list of providers authorized to make these decisions, we respectfully request that neuropsychologists be listed as well.

Neuropsychologists typically work as members of multidisciplinary teams in athletics, as well as in hospital settings where traumatic brain injuries are diagnosed and treated. Neuropsychologists have a long history of contributing to the science and clinical practice of concussion evaluation and management. The IOPC outlined the qualifications of neuropsychologists in two letters dated June 18, 2014, and September 12, 2014, to the Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Health, Lance Himes, Esq., and the Director of the Ohio Department of Health, Richard Hodges, respectively. Copies of both letters are attached for your review; we ask that they be included in the Ohio Youth Sports Concussion and Head Injury Guidelines Committee web materials.

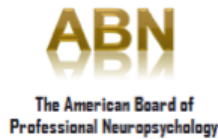
If this committee wishes to expand the number of professions authorized to make independent return-to-play decisions, we recommend that the committee include language, from current Pennsylvania law, to designate appropriately trained professionals as follows: *a licensed psychologist who is neuropsychologically trained in the evaluation and management of concussions or who has postdoctoral training in neuropsychology and specific training in the evaluation and management of concussions.*

The safety of our students is of utmost concern, and neuropsychologists are educated and trained to evaluate, assess, and care for students who sustain concussions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Members of the IOPC



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION  
PRACTICE ORGANIZATION



June 18, 2014

Lance D. Himes, Esq.  
Interim Director, Ohio Department of Health  
246 N. High St.  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Offer of consultation regarding the creation of guidelines on the diagnosis, treatment and clearance of concussions sustained by youth athletes in Ohio

Dear Mr. Himes:

We are a coalition of representatives of all of the major Neuropsychology organizations in North America writing to express our significant concern regarding the lack of representation and consultation with neuropsychologists in the development of guidelines for the evaluation and management of youth concussions in Ohio. We strongly encourage you to meet with local neuropsychologists to receive input on creating these important guidelines and stand ready to help in that process.

The Inter Organizational Practice Committee (IOPC) is a coalition of representatives of all of the major Neuropsychology organizations in the US including the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN/ American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology), The Society for Clinical Neuropsychology (SCN, Division 40 of the American Psychological Association [APA]), the National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN), and the American Board of Professional Neuropsychology (ABN), as well as the American Psychological Association Practice Organization (APAPO). The IOPC is tasked with coordinating national neuropsychology advocacy efforts, and represents approximately 8,000 neuropsychologists in the United States. The APA Practice Organization is dedicated to advancing the professional practice of psychology and represents the interests of APA members who are doctorally-trained and licensed health care professionals. It is the companion organization to the APA, which is the largest membership association of psychologists with more than 137,000 members and affiliates engaged in the practice, research and teaching of psychology. The Sports Neuropsychology Society is an organization of doctorally trained neuropsychologists whose mission is to advance the field of sports neuropsychology, to generate and disseminate knowledge regarding brain-behavior relationships as it applies to sports, and to promote the welfare of athletes at all levels of play.

Specifically, we understand that there is no neuropsychology representation on the Ohio Department of Health committee created by Ohio House Bill 487 for developing and publishing guidelines on the diagnosis, treatment and clearance of concussions sustained by youth athletes in Ohio. Given your role as the Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Health and the head of this committee, we would like to inform you about the important role neuropsychologists have played in the science and practice of concussion evaluation and management.

As you may be aware, a clinical neuropsychologist is a professional within the field of psychology with special expertise and advanced training in the applied science of brain-behavior relationships. Clinical neuropsychologists use this knowledge in the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and/or rehabilitation of patients across the lifespan with cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and sometimes physical difficulties associated with neurological, medical, neurodevelopmental, and psychiatric conditions, as well as other cognitive and learning disorders. Neuropsychologists are specialists within the field of psychology who work closely with neurologists, physiatrists, neurosurgeons and other medical specialists to provide expert care to those people who suffer from brain injury and other brain related disorders.

Specific to sports-related concussion, clinical neuropsychologists have:

- Been at the forefront of scientific/clinical initiatives to reduce risks associated with sport-related concussion and improve the overall safety for athletes participating in contact and collision sports over the past 25 years.
- Led most of the large-scale, prospective studies conducted over the past two decades as the Principal Investigators. These studies provided an evidence base that now drives the clinical assessment and management of concussion in athletes.
- Played a key role in clinical settings charged with evaluating and managing athletes after concussion, including decision-making regarding readiness to safely resume play.

Clinical neuropsychologists are recognized clinical experts in concussion:

- They often lecture on the assessment/management of sport-related concussion at large national meetings for physicians, certified athletic trainers, and other “licensed healthcare professionals.”
- They often serve on sports-related brain injury advisory boards to professional sports organizations, colleges, local school districts, the Department of Defense, and all branches of the military.
- The National Athletic Trainers' Association recommends a neuropsychologist should ideally be part of the sports-medicine team when evaluating players who have sustained a concussion (Guskiewicz, et al., 2004), and the most recent international consensus conference on sports concussion recommends consultation with a neuropsychologist for return to school management of pediatric athletes (McCrory, et al., 2013).
- A clinical neuropsychologist was the only health care provider with a speaking role at the White House Summit on Sports Concussions which took place last week in Washington D.C.
- In Ohio, clinical neuropsychologist Dr. Keith Yeates from Nationwide Children’s Hospital worked with legislators to develop the final version of House Bill 143 (the original Ohio youth concussion law). Dr. Christopher M. Bailey, director of the Concussion Program for the University Hospitals Neurological Institute, represented sports neuropsychology at the Ohio House Health Subcommittee Considering House Bill 143 on July 26, 2011, where scope of practice and education requirements to qualify a physician or other health care professional to return athletes to play was the primary topic.

The key elements for return to play after concussion are whether an athlete is free of symptoms at rest and upon exertion, with cognitive symptoms and psychological symptoms often lingering far longer than physical symptoms. Neuropsychologists are the only professionals who can fully assess these critical cognitive symptoms and the psychological symptoms that often co-occur. In addition, returning to the classroom (Return to Learn) is a key challenge for youth athletes who have suffered concussions. Neuropsychologists are uniquely qualified to assess the cognitive domains of functioning that are crucial

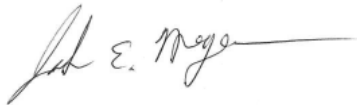
for learning, and are in the best position to recommend academic accommodations to better serve those students with cognitive difficulties. By excluding neuropsychologists, the committee runs the risk of missing an important piece of evaluation and management when drafting the guidelines, leading to inadequate, incomplete, or in some cases inappropriate care.

Based upon a review of the return to play legislation, there are at least 8 states that explicitly allow neuropsychologists (or psychologists) to make independent return to play decisions (CO, HI, LA, MA, NE, NM, PA, TN), and more than 20 states have broad language that would include neuropsychologists. This is consistent with the goals of the legislation (e.g., protect those injured and assure a good and valid evaluation), the knowledge base of the profession, and legislation enacted in other states. Our groups strongly encourage you to consider the inclusion of neuropsychologist input when creating guidelines to make these critical decisions about the youth of Ohio. Bobbie Celeste, Director of Professional Affairs for the Ohio Psychological Association, has agreed to be a point of contact for expert references and other instrumental support. She can be reached at (612) 224-0034 or bceleste@ohpsych.org.

Respectfully submitted,



Paula Shear, Ph.D.  
President, Society for Clinical Neuropsychology (APA Division 40)



John Meyers, Psy.D., ABN  
President Elect, American Board of Professional Neuropsychology



Daniel N. Allen, Ph.D.  
President, National Academy of Neuropsychology



E. Mark Mahone, Ph.D.  
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American Psychological Association

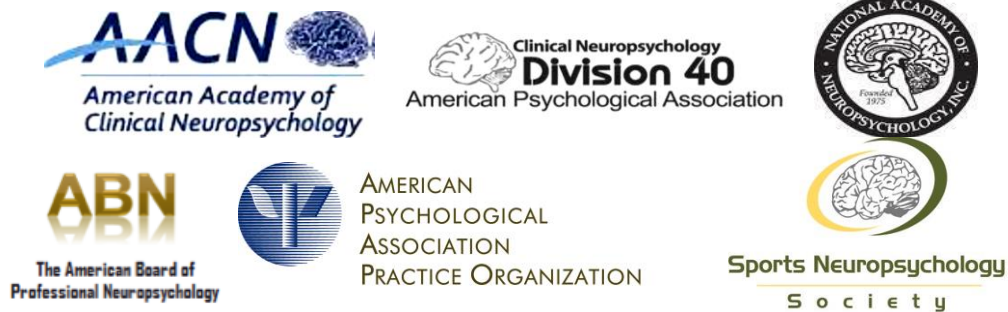


Ruben J. Echemendia, Ph.D.  
President, Sports Neuropsychology Society

References:

Guskiewicz, et al. (2004). National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Management of Sport-Related Concussion. *J. Athl Train.*, 39, 280-297.

McCrory P, Meeuwisse WH, Aubry M, et al. (2013). Consensus statement on concussion in sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, November 2012. *Brit J Sports Med*, 47, 250–258.



September 12, 2014

Richard Hodges  
Director, Ohio Department of Health  
246 N. High St.  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Offer of consultation regarding the creation of guidelines on the diagnosis, treatment and clearance of concussions sustained by youth athletes in Ohio

Dear Mr. Hodges:

On June 18, 2014, the Inter Organizational Practice Committee (IOPC), a coalition of all of the major Neuropsychology organizations in North America, drafted a letter to the Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Health, Lance Himes, Esq., expressing our significant concern regarding the lack of representation and consultation with neuropsychologists in the development of guidelines for the evaluation and management of youth concussions in Ohio. That document also described the field of Neuropsychology broadly and discussed the contributions of neuropsychologists to clinical concussion management specifically – a copy of the previous letter is attached for review. We appreciate you reaching out to the Ohio Psychology Board and continue to strongly support the inclusion of neuropsychologist input for the committee tasked with creating these guidelines, and we stand ready to help in that process.

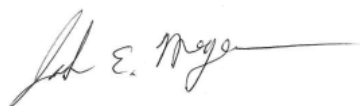
As has been stated previously, the key elements for return to play after concussion are whether an athlete is free of symptoms at rest and upon exertion, with cognitive and psychological symptoms often lingering far longer than physical symptoms. Detailed neuropsychological testing is often the only way to fully assess these critical cognitive symptoms and the psychological symptoms that often co-occur. In addition, returning to the classroom (Return to Learn) is a key challenge for youth athletes who have suffered concussions, and it can be difficult to assess readiness with a cursory screening. Neuropsychologists are uniquely qualified to assess the cognitive domains of functioning that are crucial for learning, and are in the best position to recommend academic accommodations to better serve those students with cognitive difficulties. By excluding neuropsychologists, the committee runs the risk of missing an important piece of evaluation and management when drafting the guidelines, leading to inadequate, incomplete, or in some cases inappropriate care. It is because of these issues that neuropsychologists are crucial experts in a multidisciplinary concussion management team and therefore should be included both as approved concussion management providers in Ohio as well as included as integral concussion experts whose input is vital to all Ohio concussion legislative and regulatory efforts.

On July 30, 2014, representatives from the Ohio Psychological Association and Ohio neuropsychologists met with the Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Health to discuss the role of neuropsychologists in concussion management. Among those representatives was Dr. Christopher Bailey, an Ohio neuropsychologist and sports concussion expert. When considering appropriate neuropsychologists for involvement with the committee established by Ohio House Bill 487, we hope that you will consider Dr. Bailey for this important role. In addition, Bobbie Celeste, Director of Professional Affairs for the Ohio Psychological Association, has agreed to be a point of contact for additional expert references and other instrumental support. She can be reached at (612) 224-0034 or bceleste@ohpsych.org.

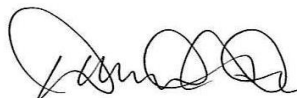
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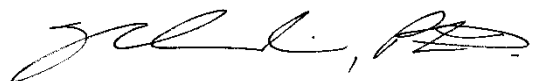
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Enclosure: Letter from the Inter Organizational Practice Committee (IOPC) to Lance Himes, Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Health, dated June 18, 2014

References:

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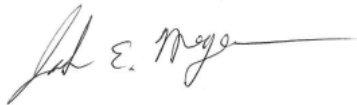
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