



Ohio Medical and Sports Experts Come Together to Advance Lifesaving Measures for the State's High School Athletes

Up to 90% of sudden deaths among high school student-athletes preventable with best practice policies

Cleveland, OH (May 4th, 2022) – The Korey Stringer Institute (KSI), a national sports safety research and advocacy organization supported by the NFL and National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), as part of its "Team Up for Sports Safety" initiative is convening dozens of Ohio's foremost experts in medicine and sports to develop a policy roadmap to advance medical practices proven to reduce sport-related deaths. The meeting, which is being hosted by the Cleveland Browns at First Energy Stadium, brings together representatives from the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSSA), Ohio Athletic Trainers' Association (OATA), sports medicine physicians, high school administrators, coaches and others to discuss ways to make high school sports safer in Ohio.

Research has shown that nearly 90% of all sudden death in sports is caused by four conditions: sudden cardiac arrest, traumatic head injury, exertional heat stroke, and exertional sickling. It has also shown that adopting evidence-based safety measures significantly reduces these risks and can save lives. According to KSI's research, [states mandate an average of 53.8% of policies proven to reduce deaths caused by these conditions](#). Ohio currently mandates 47.9% of the best practice policies.

"The state of Ohio has been a leader in the area of athletic training and sports medicine for many decades," said President Katie LaRue-Martin, AT, MPH of the Ohio Athletic Trainers' Association, "The recent enactment of updates to our licensure law has ensured that ATs across Ohio are able to use their full scope of practice and education to provide a high level of care to patients across the state. We are excited to work with the OHSAA and KSI to develop policies to further protect the health of our student athletes."

"The OHSAA and our Joint Advisory Committee for Sports Medicine (JACSM) continue to keep the safety of student-athletes and their wellbeing as a top priority," Said Emily Mason, Senior Sport Administrator for Ohio High School Athletic Association, "Being a part of the TUFSS Meeting allows us to learn from the Korey Stringer Institute and have discussions amongst the experts, physicians, trainers and key stakeholders that have the first-hand knowledge on the safety of sports medicine and student-athletes in the state of Ohio and nationwide. Our JACSM consists of a multitude of invested experts in the field and we are looking forward to discussing the findings from the TUFSS Meeting and evaluating our current practices, areas we need to advance and potentially implement new policies to reduce sports-related injuries and deaths."

"The Cleveland Browns and I are very excited to be part of a meeting that can impact every student athlete, in every sport, in every high school in the state of Ohio. To create the most up to date recommendations to our state legislators, this meeting will bring together stakeholders invested in the health and safety of our student athletes, from school administrators to first responders and physicians to athletic trainers," said Rob Flannery, MD, Assistant Cleveland Browns Team Physician and Director of High School and Community Outreach and Education for University Hospitals. "The hope is that those recommendations will make mandatory all of the

best practices in the area of student athlete health and safety. Through the Team Up For Sports Safety initiative we can make a better and safer sports environment for all of our athletes and if that saves just one life, then it makes this all worthwhile.”

The meeting will yield best-practice policy language which will be proposed to the Ohio High School Athletic Association. Since launching its “Team Up for Sports Safety” (TUFSS) campaign in 2017, Ohio is the 28th state that KSI has visited to work with state leaders to propel health and safety policy adoption forward. KSI’s data show that states which have had TUFSS meetings ended up increasing their best practice policy adoption rate by over double of those that did not, when compared across the same period.

“We know that the implementation of proven health and safety policies will help reduce sport-related fatalities,” said Casa. “We are excited that Ohio is taking action to continue to improve its policies and become a leader in minimizing sport-related high school deaths.”

For more information about the Team Up For Sport Safety initiative, please visit ksi.uconn.edu.

Media Contacts

Douglas Casa, Korey Stringer Institute, UConn
Douglas.Casa@uconn.edu
(860) 486-0265 (office)

Rebecca Stearns, COO, Korey Stringer Institute
Rebecca.Stearns@uconn.edu