

NEWS RELEASE

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IOWA PHYSICAL THERAPISTS TO MAKE 'RETURN TO PLAY' DECISIONS IN YOUTH SPORTS

*Concussion legislation is first in country to include physical therapists as health care providers
who can determine when students can get back in the game*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALEXANDRIA, VA -- A new groundbreaking law permits student athletes in Iowa to be evaluated by physical therapists to determine when it is safe to 'return to play' following a hit, fall, or other incident in order to reduce the risk of a concussion or other brain injuries, says the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

Signed April 7 by Gov Terry Branstad, SF 367 requires that a student be immediately removed from participation in an activity when a concussion is suspected, and must be evaluated by a physical therapist or other licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other brain injuries. The health care provider must provide written clearance for the student to return to activity.

"This law will make participation in athletic activity much safer for Iowa students," said APTA Iowa Chapter President Blake A. Hardy, PT, DPT, OCS. "We encourage other states to follow Iowa's example and put similar laws on their books that protect their student and youth athletes."

Following a highly visible [campaign](#) last year by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, legislation has been introduced in more than 35 states and enacted in 15 in an effort to reduce the risk of concussions or other brain injuries sustained in community and school sports or other extracurricular interscholastic activities.

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The Iowa law is the first to specifically allow student athletes to receive clearance to return to activity from a licensed physical therapist. Legislation in Vermont also includes physical therapists as health care providers who can make similar decisions, but the bill is awaiting passage. APTA is working to make certain that physical therapists and other qualified health care providers are included in similar legislation in other states to ensure that there is access and collaboration across a broad range of providers on this important public safety issue.

For more information on concussions and how a physical therapist can help, go to www.moveforwardpt.com.

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The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) represents more than 77,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students of physical therapy nationwide. Learn more about conditions physical therapists can treat and find a physical therapist in your area at www.moveforwardpt.com. Consumers are encouraged to follow us on [Twitter](#) (@moveforwardpt) and [Facebook](#).